

The Observer

Journal of The School of General Studies • Columbia University



APRIL 1996

ACCEPTABLE PREJUDICES

DEAN RICK FERRARO

2

SAYING IT

ANDREW CHAPIN

14

CONFRONTING THE BEAST

STEVE C. THEODORE

30

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EDITORIAL



The janitor has left the building . . . and Lewisohn Hall has never looked better. In one clean sweep a residual layer of rhetoric has been dusted away, and a fresh coat of ideas has added a new layer of tradition. The new Dean's have taken their seats on the fourth floor, and with the grime washed from the windows the administration looks onto the Columbia University campus, New York, and the globe. Dean Lindt's light is on far past ten, illuminating her desire to ensure the position of The School of General Studies within the University. And Dean Ferraro, who followed the blizzard into New York, immerses himself into the student body -almost becoming a student himself in his accessibility. We are optimistic.


There has been talk of boosting the GS enrollment through print and radio advertising. This concerns us. We enrolled in an Ivy League school not only because we are determined people, but we are people who enjoy challenge as a reward. It is our nature. We have willfully volunteered to endure one of the most demanding curriculums in the country. Some of us do it while working forty hours a week and raising a family. Our decision to enroll in GS was motivated by our aspirations and desires, our experience of life—not an advertisement on a train. GS is a jewel that subtly shines, not a flashy rock that feels a need to attract attention to itself.

Our virtue attracts. We need not promote. At this point, we would like to make some suggestions:

To those of you seeking a college life—the one you never had in your late teens and early twenties—welcome. Extra curricular life is thriving in GS. We may not convince you that this is so, but you cannot convince us otherwise. We are enjoying it now. We are waiting for you to join us.

To those worried about the reputation of GS—we beg you to give up these concerns. Instead, put that energy into your work and let your genius represent you. Pride is a result of hard work. Your efforts are the things that boast. Continue to work hard and our school's reputation will show what is. Butler Library awaits you. Let Dean Lindt represent us. In hers we are in sturdy and reliable hands.

To those yearning for guidance—call upon Dean Ferraro and the supporting staff in the Dean of Students office. Sit and talk with them. Remember: yours is the genius. Yours is the subtly-shining jewel. They are waiting to serve and nurture it.

The editors of this magazine were motivated to take on this project by the same urges that brought them to GS initially. When the new administration took place we sought to bolster the enthusiasm many students then experienced. They found it very challenging, gratifying, and fatiguing. But are they overly optimistic? They certainly hope you think so. 

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Because the editorial staff is new, there have been no letters. Please put letters for the next issue in The Observer mailbox - Lewisohn Hall - 3rd floor.

The staff gratefully acknowledges The Barnard Bulletin for their heroic cooperation in the technical production of this issue.

Special thanks to: Melanie Vickers and Annie Washburn

Acceptable Prejudices

by Dean Rick Ferraro

It was a snowy, bitterly cold morning. Turning my collar up in a futile gesture against the wind, I made my way to the local coffee house from the gym. I had run my standard 20 laps; and was going to reward myself with a cup of hot coffee and a buttery muffin. I looked forward to sitting quietly and reading *The New York Times* before heading off to work.

As I waited in line, I first tasted his bile. The middle-aged man, with the dark complexion and the dirty coat, almost screamed to the neatly dressed companion seated beside him while pointing at two sandy haired youths who were engaged in quiet conversation three tables away. Gesturing towards them, he bellowed: see those Jewboy, cracker, faggot, Ku Klux Klan, ass hissing punks. He went on to say they were the cause of his undefined troubles, they were the reason he had never gotten his fair share, they were the cause of the decline of the whole city.

Everyone in the coffee bar strained to perform his/her role in the face of social dissonance. The tall angular man with the ruddy complexion, who stood behind the bar, amiably poured coffee and served pastries; the African-American woman with the furrowed brow rang up bills with undiminished efficiency; the patrons intensely scrutinized their newspapers as they wolfed down their breakfasts.

The man with the dirty coat and mouth kept up his harangue, pointing again at the two sandy haired youths, spewing forth a new string of epithets. His neatly dressed companion tried to get him to change the topic of conversation, inquiring too transparently as to the state of the Knicks; and the objects of his derision, the two sandy haired youths, attempted to carry on their earnest discussion.

It seemed odd. Everyone in the coffee house appeared to act as if the dirty man were an apparition who could not be seen or heard; everyone seemed to strain not to take note of what was passing. I too was part of this audience of the deaf, but almost against my will I heard myself saying in a voice too loud by half: I can't believe we have to suffer this loud-mouthed bigot at 7:45

in the morning. Can't bigots wait until a decent hour, say 11:30 or 12:00 to spread their venom? Why do we have to listen to this rubbish?

The man with the dirty mouth suddenly stopped declaiming; the patrons hesitatingly looked up from their drinks and newspapers; even the two sandy-haired youths seemed to take a short break from their studied colloquy. They seemed to pause as if they had decided together that they needed to give an answer to this newcomer from Virginia. Finally an older man with a white mustache, who was waiting in line, responded.

"We take this rubbish—as you put it—because those young fellas are not a protected group. It is an acceptable prejudice you see."

As I prepared to leave the coffee house, almost in embarrassment for having broken with accepted local custom, I wondered about the man with the white mustache. Had he spoken in irony, in sardonic protest? Or had he simply despaired? Still the words resonated: "It is an acceptable prejudice, you see."

Acceptable Prejudices. It made a certain degree of sense given the context of American history. In the 18th century, it was considered bad form for a Presbyterian to berate too cruelly a Congregationalist or a Lutheran, but it was perfectly acceptable to condemn Catholics or Jews. In the 19th century, "Know Nothings" were more than willing to accept Scotch Irish immigrants, but their cousins from the greater portion

of the Emerald Isle, were a cause of great concern. In the early 20th century, sporting occupations were largely open to certain Hispanics (particularly "white" Cubans), but their Spanish speaking brethren, who possessed an admixture of Indian or African blood, were excluded. But I did not have to turn to historical analysis; I had seen the notion of acceptable prejudice at work in the classroom.

The lesson had been taught in the city too busy to hate, in Atlanta. I was an Assistant Dean at a very expensive and privileged university. I taught an extended orientation class, orga-



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nized around issues: political participation, volunteer opportunities, responsible dating, sexism, use and abuse of alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases, effects of chemical substances, and racism. There was some leeway allowed to the individual instructor, and when we got to the section on race and ethnicity, instead of relying on a standard set of readings, we did an exercise. It was entitled, "Covenant with the Zadarians."

As the instructor, I set the background by asking the assembled students to suspend belief. I explained we were in the year 2027: they were all advisors to the president of the United States (the active presence of Jimmy Carter on campus made that quite possible to envision); the national debt had risen to an enormous total, and the only way to avoid national bankruptcy was to double everyone's taxes. To the group, composed mostly of upper and upper middle class students, the prospect of multiplying taxes by two seemed something close to heresy. The students implored that there must be another way.

Well, there was another possibility. In the previous year, we had made contact with the people of Zadar, beings from a distant planet. The Zadarians, a trading people, wanted to establish a commercial entrepot and engage in mercantile relationships. They would pay off the entire national debt—and give us an additional tidy sum so that we could spend beyond our means for a while longer—so long as we would meet one condition. They asked us to sell them a state in order to set up their trading base on this planet.

I explained that it was benign, nothing more than a mini-Louisiana purchase in reverse. One could even think of it as good business practice—geographical downsizing, and I stressed the payoff: if we bargained effectively we might be able to reduce taxes to favor consumption. There was no one to convince: the class warmed to the prospect of the sale, and we began a spirited vote to determine the state that would be deaquisitioned.

I did not think there was too much mystery about which state would be chosen. I expected the easterners in the class (since they were attending a southern school) would have too good manners to pick a midwestern state; and I assumed the southerners would take dead aim in the spawning ground of "Yankee-ness," the Empire State, New York. I was fairly close: Kansas received the most votes for sale, and New Jersey was next. (In their ballots, several students admitted they had thought of ceding New York, but the cheaper land values, and the less vaunted art collections of New Jersey suggested they could get more for their Zadarian dollar by selling the Garden State.) The class was in a festive mood, and as votes for various

states were recorded, they were met by giggles, back-slaps, guffaws, and a running commentary.

The mood of the class changed markedly, however, as I indicated that the paradigm had to be altered. The Zadarians, I assured, were not land poor—they were labor poor. They needed workers to come to Zadar to exploit the mines, farms, and factories. The Zadarians were a disciplined people, but they were also very skilled. If the workers labored assiduously, they might even be able to return to earth in the not too distant future. There was one *proviso* however: the Zadarians, faced with the need to educate a large number of new workers according to a radically different system, for efficiencies sake, strongly desired to have a labor force composed of persons from a single ethnic group. I then listed the groups from which the worker cohort could be chosen: African Americans, Irish Americans, Italian Americans, Jewish Americans, Native Americans, and Polish Americans.

There was some grumbling; a couple of students indicated they would rather not choose. But I explained, in a firm voice, that that was part of their obligation: in the terms of the game, as presidential advisors, they could not let down their chief executive; and in regard to this class, as their teacher, I expected them to make the tough decisions.

I had not known what to expect in response to this question. I had hoped that they would truly make the tough decision and say that we, as Americans, had to decide to double our own taxes rather than sacrifice our brethren. I knew that the acceptable prejudice of regional discrimination had lowered their resistance, and had already compromised the ethical standards to a certain degree, but I hoped they would rebel when the stakes were raised from physical expropriation of land to the loss of personal freedom.

In my heart, I feared that they might show the traditional bias of the south—pick on blacks, or Jews, or the more recent foreign-born Hispanics. Would the exercise show that their education had failed to blunt the bitter prejudices of their ancestors?

Several persons temporized. They asked me to describe the conditions on Zadar. I assured that the Zadarians had a splendid history, were devoted to literature, and were lovers of music. I noted they tended to be a little ethnocentric, but I added they possessed high energy and great discipline. I suggested foreigners might even feel privileged to serve Zadarian culture. Then I said it was time to vote.

No one, absolutely no one, picked African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans or Jewish Americans. Familiar, more or less, with the travails that these groups have historically, suffered, they refused to add to their burden. They recognize them, in a very real way, as protected



LEWISOHN HALL

groups. This was a sign, which in isolation, seemed hopeful. But with the exception of one person who refused to vote, the 24 persons in the group made the bad bargain to one degree or another: one to two votes for exportation went to German Americans, Greek Americans, and Irish Americans. But the balance of the votes fell to two groups.

The first group bound for Zadar was Arab Americans. The ballots offered a number of motives: 1) One person (trying to be funny or showing a "hightist" bias) said that Arabs tended to be short in stature and therefore expelling them would help the "gene" pool of Americans; 2) A few persons said we had too many Muslims all ready in this Christian nation; and 3) Several students opined it was a good way to punish a group of persons held to be disproportionately responsible for acts of terrorism. I asked the students if collective punishment and/or religious homogeneity were really good reasons to make the proffered, and there was no visible reaction. Only when I noted that Arab Americans included a large number of Lebanese Christians was some discomfort shown.

The second group chosen was Polish Americans. There was no animus expressed here; it was done almost good naturedly, as if the exercise had been transformed into a kind of super Polish joke. It was felt that Catholic Polish Americans formed a small group which had not attributed much to America. If one had to make a bad bargain, the students reasoned it was best to choose the least important group, one that was not of great significance demographically. Students were surprised to learn that more than eight percent of the US population could point to Polish antecedents; and they also were astonished to find out that Jews comprised less than one percent of Germanese population in 1939. In their comments, some students said that the quantitative aspect was not terribly important; they stressed a perceived qualitative shortfall. I asked the students to name a famous Polish American. A person from the New York area assured that there was a bridge in the Big Apple named after a pole in the Revolutionary War, whose last name began with the letter K; and a second person wondered if the man who played Dracula in old movies (the Hungarian-American, Bela Lugosi) was Polish. The class reluctantly came to the conclusion that we might need a Polish-American history month.

I asked why no one had chosen Italian Americans. I wondered if my own ethnic identity and fear of displeasing the teacher had swayed them. They responded no, that they had sparred Italian Americans, largely because of favorable stereotypes on television and in movies. Based on TV characters and movie stars they thought of Italian Americans as somewhat exotic and brooding, but interesting and sensitive. Essentially

Italian Americans were saved by good public relations.

After the exercise had finished, we had a debriefing. I began by saying that I recognized that the exercise was just that, an exercise: it was not a real-life event. I conceded that some persons might have gone along with a teachers eccentricity simply to humor that person. But I also expressed concern that small compromises in the short term can lead to larger ones in the long hall.

I related that I found it encouraging that the group had been sensitive to the needs of formerly protected groups, and to the Jews who had been so viciously treated in western history. I went on to say, however, that I had hoped for something more, that I had wanted them to extend humanitarian consideration to non-protected groups. I shared that what I had really desired (the right answer, as it were) was a negative response to both questions, whether in regard to the sale of a State or the depor-

tation of an ethnic group. I reminded them that there had always been the alternative of choosing to share burdens and responsibilities, of deciding to work together to pay taxes, of determining to protect all the people.

I went on to clarify that I had started consciously with regional prejudice because it is the gateway bias, one that tends to trivialize and legitimize many other forms of discrimination. I urged the students not to get discouraged, but to learn from this primary lesson in their first class of their college years. Do not obey the man in the tie if he is wrong; hold to your ethical standards; preserve your values; cling to what is righteous. Do not let flattery, power, the high opinion of so-called important persons, or the desire to please distort your value system, even if the occasion is seemingly not real or deadly serious.

One student said that all the class had done was to apply "affirmative action" principles, that is, to shelter protected groups, they had made the necessary choice to disenfranchise other more privileged groups. I noted that that was not quite true, for no one had selected English Americans. And I made the larger point, that while affirmative action has some place in questions that touch on fair competition for jobs and promotions, it cannot be a license to create wholesale new patterns of discrimination and new victims.

Another student asked if I believed there were any acceptable prejudices. This fellow from the mid-west asked if I would make a big deal if he told a "Norwegian" joke, as it was done in Minnesota. At the price of appearing humorless, I said I would find it offensive, that I believed there were no acceptable prejudice when people and their basic ascriptive characteristics were concerned. Open the door to one form of ethnic, regional,

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The Road Ahead

Post-Reconstruction and the GSSC:

by Estelle Maria Raboni

Prior to 1994, the Columbia University Administration used the construct of The School of General Studies as an umbrella to house not only the undergraduate degree candidates and pre-medical students but also students in continuing education, the American Language Program, computer technology, the Summer session, special programs for high school students and the Master's Program in Liberal Arts. Needless to say, such a hodgepodge of courses and disciplines deflected and misrepresented the mission of The School of General Studies: to educate the returning undergraduate adult student seeking to fulfill the bachelor's degree. As a result, General Studies students are in the position they are in today - still misrepresented, misunderstood and maligned. Of course there are those professors and students from the other three undergraduate colleges who have and always will support GS students because they know the quality of our students and our education. Yet, there are and probably always will be the "traditionalists" - those groups of people that cannot understand why students our age didn't get it right the first time. Why didn't we graduate at twenty-one?

Behind such questions lie presumptions about universal experiences and resources. These are people who do not acknowledge or are unfamiliar to the constriction of economics, race and/or gender. They are unfamiliar with the notion of having to work full-time, and support oneself or a family. They seem not to acknowledge that the will does not always find a way because often times the will is about all one can muster. The same people that do not understand the circumstances of the older student also do not understand the

arguments raised against racism, sexism and homophobia. Again, the problem lies in assuming that everyone is or should be the same, and if they are not, the problem lies in the deviant and not the social, economic, and cultural constructions in which we live and are judged.

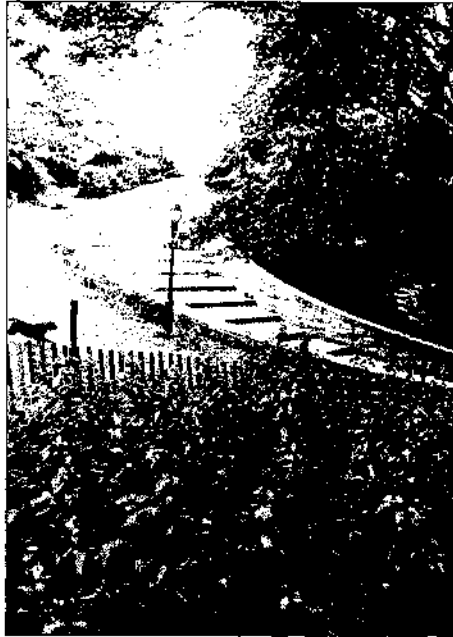


PHOTO BY DAVID MELIUS

Despite the attempts to paint Columbia as a melting pot of diversity, the University falls short of its description. One shortcoming is its treatment of the adult student. Why is it that GS students graduate with a higher debt load than graduates from the other undergraduate colleges? Why, despite our consistent high quality academic performances, are GS students considered less qualified to be on this campus? Again, why are adult students forced to take day courses because evening equivalents do not exist? While I am grateful that the university administration has addressed our needs by concluding the

search for all deans, reconstructed the college to include only undergraduate degree and pre-medical students and recognized our needs for a hospitable student lounge, there is still much that needs to be done in support for The School of General Studies.

As a student organization, the General Studies Student Council seeks to correct these misperceptions by students administration level through communication and representation. While in the past, student leaders felt it necessary to associate with the graduate student councils, the current body of the GSSC felt such associations undermined our identity as an undergraduate college. If we are to be considered an undergraduate counterpart to Columbia College, Barnard and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, then we must seek their company and communicate jointly on issues that affect us all. As a result, this year the GSSC hosted the first Columbia University Inter-Council Dinner, inviting all members from the four undergraduate student councils as well as the leaders from the Student Governing Board and United Student Organizations. This led to the appointment of our own liaisons to each of the undergraduate student councils and liaisons from other councils to our weekly meetings.

Such initiatives have established communication not only on our activities but also on our specific problems as they affect our individual schools. They give other schools a feeling for what our student population is like and the concerns we have in common. Such communication has led to a real understanding that we are not alone: we GS students feel our needs take a backseat, but Barnard and SEAS have voiced similar feelings

too. While such discoveries seem inconsequential, they speak volumes about the University's mission to place Columbia College front and center of the Columbia community, often at the expense of other schools.

Knowing that we have more similarities than differences led the GSSC and other corresponding councils to join forces in fighting cuts to financial aid by addressing student services and class size, co-sponsoring lobby trips to Washington, and forums to combat the rise of racial tension plaguing our campus.

These are small steps, yet they are steps in the right direction. There is still much that needs to be done to bring GS closer to the center of undergraduate life. To further this goal, and in light of

our upcoming membership in the new Lerner Student Center, the GSSC aims to become one of the four college participants in the joint orientation program, currently hosted by the other undergraduate colleges, as well as participate in the university yearbook. It is our mission to integrate GS politically and socially into the undergraduate community.

However, the GSSC alone cannot keep watch of all the ageists that purport to make us less than what we are. We all need to contribute to this fight by addressing ageism and elitism when we witness it, educate the ignorant, and silence them with the truth. If we do not speak up—acknowledge our identity as GS students—then we become conspirators in our own demise. While

we have come a long way over the past year, this is the time to increase the momentum and consistency of our efforts as a community. Run for council office. Vote for the best candidate. Postpone that French homework and send that letter to the Spec. Do what you can as often as you can to make the truth be known. ☞



ESTELLE MARIA RABONI is a Latin woman from Manhattan majoring in Women and Gender Studies with a Pre-Med concentration. She graduates in May 1997 and hopes to go on the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

Super Curricular Activities

by Walter Sweet

I've made it and none too soon. This semester I graduate and many, I dare say, look forward to some peace. Yet, as my stay at Columbia nears its end, I cannot help but reflect on what has transpired. As such, I possess a reservoir of pent up physic energy which compels me to offer a glimpse of the future of what I think will happen, or needs to happen, to our peculiar and endearing school which I have considered a second home: The School of General Studies.

To say that GS is diverse really fails to capture 900 or so different ways in which our students approach their education. With just under 1000 students, the school is by far the smallest undergraduate institution in the Ivy League—less than one third the size of CC! One might think, therefore, that forming a close-knit community would be a simple endeavor. Not so. Because our students work, raise families, (even hold elected

office) and/or take on tremendous course loads, there is often little time for them to gather and get to know their fellow travelers.



To say that GS is diverse really fails to capture 900 or so different ways in which our students approach their education.

It is precisely because of the unique nature of the demands with which our students contend that the University (read: Provost Cole and President Rupp) agreed to fund the renovation of

Lewisohn Hall, complete with our new lounge. If you haven't been there yet, go. It is one of the nicer places to study, reflect, or chat on campus. And importantly, it is an excellent place to meet your fellow travelers through this Columbia experience.

Many disagree with me. But I believe that the education a Columbia student receives outside the classroom is nearly as important as that received within. For it is not within the class that many of us truly get a chance to debate, to reflect upon, to question much of what we are studying. It is an unfortunate reality that large lecture classes do not make for good debate forums. Nevertheless, the relationships and extra-curricular interactions that a student can engage here will serve to make whole the Columbia education.

It is important to question one's deeply held beliefs. And it is also impor-

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Possibilities Without End

by Bernie Lenahan

The purpose of this essay is to convince my fellow General Studies students of the following: even though your efforts to save Federal and State Financial Aid programs were successful last year, more political participation in the future is the only avenue open to us if we want to guarantee the continuing accessibility of a higher education.

Last year, Newt Gingrich and the gang of '94 tried to pass a bill that would eliminate interest deferred student loans while our Newtonian Governor, George Pataki, proposed both draconian social services "reforms", and the elimination of nearly all of New York's opportunity programs in the area of higher education. Gingrich and his acolytes were thwarted by several large scale demonstrations and a massive letter writing as well as a lobbying campaign by students from all over the country. Similar demonstrations and tactics by New York students and their families convinced Governor Pataki to abandon his plan to eliminate the Higher Education Opportunity Program, although he succeeded to kill or cripple seven other programs statewide.

The reason the Governor did not eliminate HEOP was that student pressure forced him to put down his budget ax long enough to look at the program. He discovered that HEOP boasts a higher graduation rate than the national average and that the program's graduates contribute more than sixty million dollars a year to the State's tax base. One

might logically assume that our Governor would expand such a program in an effort to help more economically disadvantaged New Yorkers deal with our changing economy. Instead, Governor Pataki cut the HEOP program's budget by twenty five percent; now he wants to eliminate the State Education Department.

On the surface, eliminating the SED looks like the fulfillment of one of our Governor's campaign promises to downsize government in order to eliminate waste. In reality, as long as the

Mirrors George has been able to garner a lot of support from the middle class through his promised tax cuts. The average New Yorker making fifty-thousand dollars got back one hundred thirty five dollars more on his state taxes last year. If that average New Yorker has a child going to a State University, they paid seven hundred fifty dollars more in tuition for this academic year. Smoke and Mirrors giveth and Smoke and Mirrors taketh away.

Before we move on to the federal miasma, I want to take this opportunity

to make my position on Governor Pataki's tax cut clear for all to understand. The Governor's tax package gives its most substantial cuts to those New Yorkers in the top five percent income bracket. I sympathize with the Governor. The poor don't have any money and no one wants to tax their friends.

The Governor's plans to limit Tuition Assistance Program eligibility and eliminate the State

Education Department are so convoluted in their implications for students that we all ought to give thanks to our friends on the House Committees for Higher Education and Ways and Means, HEOP and Columbia's offices of Public Affairs and Student Financial Services. Without their watchful eyes, and the cooperation of our Student Governments, many students would eventually have to face the choice of dropping out or going into very deep debt. The bad news is that the complexity

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PHOTO BY DAVID MELINS

SED exists in its present form, the Governor is forced to deal with a department that operates outside of his direct control. His solution is to legislate the department out of existence. So far, the Democratically controlled State Assembly has prevented Governor Pataki from doing just that—so far. The fact that a possibility exists that the SED could be eliminated at some point in the future ought to frighten any New Yorker who is either a college student or has children going to college. The trouble is, up until now, Old Smoke and



DAN QUAYLE MAY NOT APPROVE OF SINGLE MOTHERS, BUT PAMELA SHAW

IS FAR TOO BUSY TO NOTICE OR CARE WHAT THE NOW EX-VICE PRESIDENT HAS TO SAY ABOUT HER. AS A SINGLE MOTHER RAISING AN EIGHT AND A HALF YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, PAMELA HAS LITTLE TIME TO CARE ABOUT THE LAUNCHING OF DESPERATE ATTACKS BY A POLITICIAN FLAILING FOR A FINGERHOLD. PAMELA, FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, HAS BEEN SIMULTANEOUSLY RAISING HER DAUGHTER AND ATTENDING COLUMBIA FULL-TIME WHERE SHE MAJORS IN LITERATURE WRITING AND MINORS IN SECONDARY

HANNAH. AFTER A FEW YEARS THEY GREW IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AND DIVORCED. AND PAMELA WAS LEFT TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH HER INDEPENDENCE. SHE HAD HAD SOME SUCCESS AS A WRITER AND WAS INTERESTED IN PSYCHOLOGY SO SHE APPLIED TO GENERAL STUDIES. HER ORIGINAL INTENTION WAS TO STUDY PSYCHOLOGY BUT HER LOVE OF DRAMA AND LITERATURE SOON WON OUT AND SHE DECIDED TO MAJOR IN LITERATURE AND WRITING. FEELING NATURALLY INCLINED TO TEACH, THE MINOR IN EDUCATION WAS AN EASY CHOICE AS WELL.




PHOTO BY COURTESY OF PAM SHAW

EDUCATION. IT IS WITH PRIDE THAT SHE TALKS ABOUT HER DAUGHTER AND HER ACADEMIC CAREER AND WITH GOOD REASON. BOTH ARE DOING WELL. PAMELA CARRIES EIGHTEEN POINTS A SEMESTER AND HOLDS A 3.9 AVERAGE. HER DAUGHTER IS IN ADVANCED CLASSES AND ALREADY STUDIES ALGEBRA. IT IS CLEAR THAT BOTH BEAUTY AND BRAINS RUN IN THIS FAMILY.

PAMELA WAS BORN IN WISCONSIN BUT RAISED IN VIRGINIA. WHEN SHE WAS EIGHTEEN SHE CAME TO NEW YORK TO PURSUE A CAREER MODELING AND ACTING. AFTER FIVE YEARS ON THE SOAPS SHE MET AND FELL IN LOVE WITH ROCK MUSICIAN TOMMY SHAW (REMEMBER STYX) AND THEY SOON MARRIED AND SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY GIRL,

WHEN SHE FINISHES HER DEGREE SHE PLANS TO TEACH DRAMA AND CREATIVE WRITING IN PRIVATE GIRL'S SCHOOLS. SHE SAYS THAT SHE WANTS TO TEACH GIRLS BECAUSE SHE FEELS A NATURAL AFFINITY FOR TEENAGE GIRLS AND HAS SEVERAL TIMES FOUND HERSELF IN THE POSITION OF ROLE MODEL. MORE IMPORTANTLY, SHE FEELS THAT BY TEACHING GIRLS SHE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO EVENING OUT THE IMBALANCE IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TOWARDS MALE STUDENTS. "A LOT OF THE STUFF THAT I AM STUDYING NOW IS JUST ILLUSTRATING HOW SLANTED THE SYSTEM IS TOWARDS MALE STUDENTS. THE BOYS CERTAINLY GET THE LIONS SHARE OF THE ATTENTION FROM TEACHERS." SHE WANTS TO TEACH CREATIVE WRITING SO THAT SHE CAN HELP YOUNGER GIRLS FIND WAYS TO OPEN UP AND FIND A CHANNEL FOR THEIR EMOTIONAL LIVES. PAM SAYS SHE "ENJOYS BEING A ROLE MODEL, AN EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE ADULT WHO GIVES A SHIT. IT IS SOMETHING THAT I AM EXCITED ABOUT."

RAISING A DAUGHTER AND CARRYING A FULL COURSE LOAD MAY BE A STRAIN FOR SOME, BUT PAMELA SEEMS TO THRIVE ON THE CHALLENGE AND THE STIMULATION. AND HANNAH KICKS IN TOO, GIVING MOM HELPFUL STUDY HINTS AT FINALS TIME. IT IS A FAR CRY FROM THE "GLAMOROUS" LIFE OF SOAP OPERAS AND ROCK AND ROLL, BUT WHEN ASKED, PAMELA SAYS SHE WOULDN'T GO BACK FOR ANYTHING. "I FEEL LIKE I'VE WAITED MY WHOLE LIFE TO GET TO THIS PART." 

BY W. J. RADZIEJEWSKI

OF ALL THE REASONS TO INTERRUPT AN EDUCATION

KELLY KILLOREN MAY HAVE THE BEST. KELLY WAS JUST AN AVERAGE COLLEGE FRESHMAN AT TRINITY COLLEGE IN CONNECTICUT WHEN SHE BEGAN MODELING TO EARN A LITTLE EXTRA MONEY. SHE THEN SPENT THE NEXT THREE AND A HALF YEARS LIVING IN PARIS, LONDON, ITALY, AND AUSTRALIA, WORKING THE RUNWAYS OF HIGH FASHION AND POSING FOR SPREADS IN PRESTIGIOUS MAGAZINES LIKE ELLE. IN ADDITION SHE BEGAN DESIGNING HER OWN LINE OF JEWELRY CALLED "CHOKER" WHICH IS SOLD HERE IN NEW YORK AT BARNEY'S. NOT BAD, HUH?

BUT THEN ONE DAY SHE WAS SHOWING SOME FRIENDS FROM PARIS AROUND THE CITY AND TOOK THEM TO COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. IT WAS THEN SHE FELT WHAT SHE DESCRIBES AS AN "EPHEMERAL" FEELING THAT SHE WANTED TO GO TO SCHOOL HERE. COMBINE THAT WITH A PROMISE MADE TO HER FATHER WHEN SHE STARTED MODELING THAT SHE WOULD RETURN TO SCHOOL AND FINISH HER EDUCATION BY THE TIME SHE WAS TWENTY-FIVE, AND SHE APPLIED. SHE WAS TWENTY FOUR AT THE TIME AND HAS NOW BEEN ATTENDING COLUMBIA FOR THREE YEARS, MAJORING IN

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

THAT EPHEMERAL FEELING HAS HELD UP FOR KELLY AND SHE SAYS THAT SHE FEELS THAT COLUMBIA IS A SPECIAL PLACE. SHE LOOKED AROUND AT NYU AND OTHER LOCAL SCHOOLS BEFORE MAKING HER DECISION AND HAS NOT REGRETTED IT SINCE. KELLY COMES FROM A FAMILY OF LAWYERS AND FOR HER TO HAVE NOT COMPLETED HER EDUCATION SHE SAYS WAS "A LITTLE UNDESIRABLE." AFTER COMPLETING HER BACHELOR'S DEGREE SHE WOULD LIKE TO GET A GRADUATE DEGREE IN JOURNALISM (ALSO FROM COLUMBIA) OR PURSUE A FREE-LANCE WRITING CAREER.

FOR KELLY IT IS THE QUALITY OF THE STUDENTS AS WELL AS THE QUALITY OF THE INSTRUCTION THAT MAKE COLUMBIA SO SPECIAL. SHE SAYS THAT SHE HAS NOT FOUND ANY PREJUDICE AGAINST HER AS AN OLDER STUDENT AND HAS FOUND INSTEAD A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT. KELLY SAYS THAT SHE FINDS THE STUDENTS HERE HAVE A HIGH LEVEL OF CURIOSITY ABOUT LIFE AND THAT CURIOSITY EXTENDS TO HER AND HER LIFE AS WELL. "AT TRINITY I REMEMBER WHEN OLDER STUDENTS WERE IN MY CLASSES OR SEMINARS I WOULD FEEL A LITTLE LIKE THEY WE'RE TAKING UP MY TIME. I DON'T GET THAT FEELING HERE. I THINK THE CALIBER OF STUDENTS IS DIFFERENT HERE. THEY ARE MORE CURIOUS, AND BECAUSE OF THAT CURIOSITY THEY WELCOME THE CURIOSITY OF ANY AGE."


THE VARIETY OF STUDENTS AND COURSES AVAILABLE, THE LACK OF HOMOGENEITY MAKE GS A GOOD FIT FOR KELLY'S ACTIVE LIFE. SHE STILL MODELS, MANUFACTURES AND DESIGNS HER JEWELRY, TRAVELS AND CONTRIBUTES A GREAT DEAL OF TIME TO CHARITY WORK IN ADDITION TO HER STUDIES. "COLUMBIA IS LIKE JUST ONE OF MY FINGERS. BUT BEING A PART OF MY BODY I TREAT IT WITH THE SAME RESPECT THAT I DO MY WORK OR CHARITY OR WHATEVER I'M DOING." 



PHOTO BY GILLES BISHNOFF. COURTESY OF HEAT MAGAZINE

BY W. J. RADZIEJEWSKI

AND IF YOU HAPPEN TO NEED A GOOD LITTLE LEAGUE COACH...

YOU CAN DO FAR WORSE THAN DEAN OF ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID BARBARA TISCHLER.

I THOUGHT THAT I HAD BIT OFF MORE THAN I COULD CHEW WHEN I APPROACHED DEAN TISCHLER AND TOLD HER THAT THE OBSERVER WOULD LIKE TO DO A FEATURE ON A MEMBER OF THE ADMINISTRATION SO THAT STUDENTS COULD BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE PLAYERS THAT ARE SO INFLUENTIAL IN THEIR ACADEMIC LIVES. HER RESPONSE WAS TO TELL ME THAT SHE WOULD BE THRILLED, THEN SHE HANDED ME A NINE PAGE RESUME. BARBARA TISCHLER IS CLEARLY A BUSY AND MOTIVATED INDIVIDUAL AND THIS WAS OBVIOUS TO ME AND OTHER MEMBERS OF GS EVEN BEFORE I HEFTED HER RESUME INTO MY BOOKBAG AND LUGGED IT HOME TO REVIEW. AND IT IS THIS MOTIVATION COUPLED WITH A SINCERE CONCERN FOR STUDENTS AND A READY ACCESSIBILITY TO STUDENTS CONCERNS WHICH MADE THIS CURRENT EDITORIAL STAFF UNANIMOUS IN OUR CONSENT THAT SOME ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO HER AND HER EFFORTS AT GS.


BARBARA TISCHLER HAS BEEN THE DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID FOR THE SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SINCE 1991. PREVIOUSLY, SHE WAS THE ASSISTANT DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND DIRECTOR OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS ALSO AT GS. SHE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSEMENT OF ALL OF THE GS SCHOLARSHIPS AND FOR REVIEWING APPLICATIONS FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE SCHOOL. IN ADDITION, SHE ACTS AS CONSULTANT TO THE DEAN ON POLICY ISSUES AND IS HELPING TO COORDINATE THE MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS OF THE SCHOOL.

ALTHOUGH HER ADMINISTRATIVE WORK TAKES UP THE MAJORITY OF HER TIME, SHE IS ALSO AN ACADEMIC WITH A PH.D. IN HISTORY FROM OUR VERY OWN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. HER LOVE OF HISTORY SPRANG FROM HER LOVE

OF MUSIC. HER B.A. IS IN MUSIC FROM DOUGLAS COLLEGE AND SHE HOLDS A MASTER OF MUSIC (PERFORMANCE) FROM THE MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC WHERE SHE STUDIED THE OBOE. HER FIRST TEACHING JOBS WERE IN MUSIC, AND WHEN I ASKED HER WHY SHE SWITCHED TO HISTORY SHE SAID, "I DIDN'T. I JUST FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO TEACH MUSIC WITHOUT TEACHING ALL OF THE SOCIALLY RELEVANT

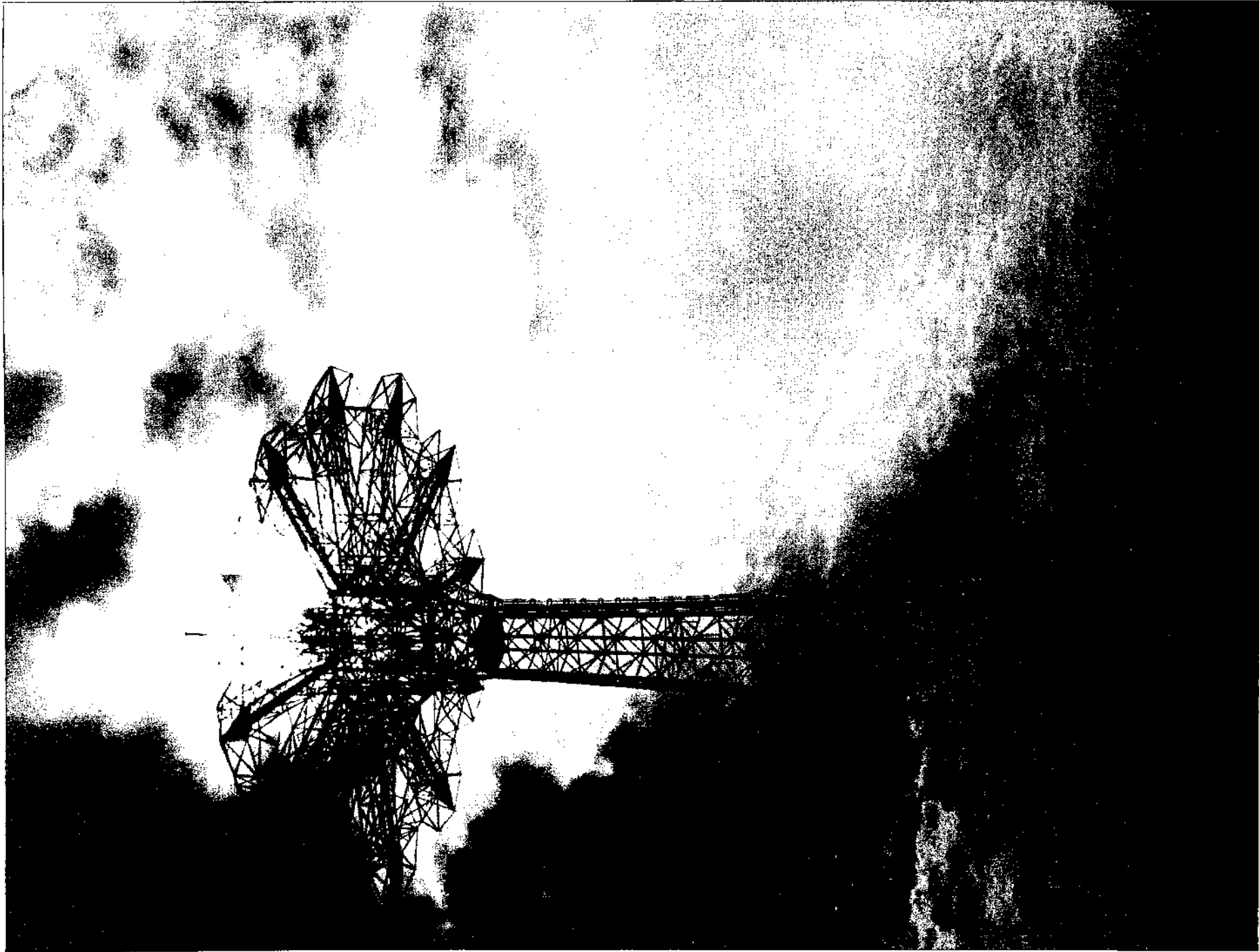
TOPICS THAT LEAD TO THE MAKING OF MUSIC." SHE NOW TEACHES A COURSE IN THE SIXTIES OFFERED BY THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT—REMEMBER THOSE OSTRACIZED PEOPLE CALLED LIBERALS? WELL, BARBARA TISCHLER IS ONE OF THEM AND PROUD TO BE SO.

SHE IS MOTIVATED BY A BELIEF IN ACTIVISM IN THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY AND HER MOTIVATION CARRIES FORTH BEYOND THESE IVY WALLS TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY WHERE SHE RESIDES. ON HER DAY OFF SHE CAN BE FOUND IN RIVERSIDE PARK ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY SERVICE. SHE TRADES IN HER ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE HATS FOR A BASEBALL CAP AND CORRALS A GROUP OF OVERACTIVE TEN YEAR OLDS ONTO THE BASEBALL DIAMOND FOR THE WEST SIDE LITTLE LEAGUE. SHE HAS BEEN COACHING LITTLE LEAGUE FOR FOUR YEARS NOW. SHE STARTED COACHING WHEN HER OLDEST SON FIRST EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE SPORT. NOW AT FOURTEEN, HE IS TOO BIG TO ALLOW MOM TO COACH HIM BUT THAT'S OKAY, HER TEN YEAR OLD SON IS GOING TO HAVE A GREAT YEAR PITCHING AND PLAYING CATCHER.

KNOWING THE AMOUNT OF TIME AND ENERGY THAT IT TAKES TO PARTICIPATE ON SUCH A GRASS ROOTS LEVEL I ADMIRABLY COMMENTED THAT IT SEEMS THAT SHE WAS LIVING THE IDEALS OF THE SIXTIES. SHE CALMLY AND SIMPLY REPLIED, "I BELIEVE THAT STUFF." 

BY W. J. RADZIEJEWSKI





April 1996

Jason swung the ax as far above his head as he could, before he slammed it down into the log. With a cracking rip the wood split, fell, thumping onto the ground. Jason reached down and tossed the pieces toward his waist-high pile which would find its way, a bit at a time, into the fireplace of his home during the next winter. Leaning on his ax, he wiped some of the sweat from his forehead, and late summer's insects buzzed his slick, naked chest. He flipped his hand back and forth, giving himself a few seconds' rest from their irritation. When he looked up, there she was. His chest tightened as if someone had put him in a bearhug.

She stood on the rise behind the house, under the magnificent branches of a hundred years old elm. With her hands on her hips and her head thrown back, her face looked up to the canopy of greenery, while sunlight, streaming down through the leaves, dappled her in an island of heavenly light. Her eyes closed and a smile spread across her face. She seemed to be feeling everything around her, taking it all in happily, into the deepest part of her being — inhaling the air, the breeze, the old horse, the trees, the dog, the grass, all the life of the farm, their world together. And she stood there plain in her pale cotton dress with her shiny brown hair hanging down. Just looking at her, Jason's heart ached.

She straightened her head, opened her eyes toward the distant hills. For a few moments, she stood intently gazing, as if she could see something moving slowly from the distance toward her, toward Jason and her, the way the shadow of a cloud moves across the ground. When she turned her eyes toward him, instead of seeing him, her gaze went through him. Jason's jaw opened slightly, his lips curled to call her name but no sound would come. He raised his arm and waved to her but she did not see him.

Jason looked down and frowned at his body, his thick pectoral muscles, his bulging forearms, his thick and calloused hands. He scowled at those hands which curled into fists around the ax-handle. Ruth turned and walked across the lawn, into the house, and the screen door slammed with two slight smacks. Jason lifted another log onto the chopping stump, and continued his work.

Later, after dinner, Jason sat in his chair at the table in the kitchen where they always ate, and watched Ruth clear the table, and then with her back to him, prepare the dishes in the sink for washing. When she finally immersed her hands deep into the hot sudsy water, he said, "The county fair begins tonight" Ruth twisted her head back toward him and again that smile came over her face. Jason added, "Would you like to go?" "Yes," Ruth answered as Jason's chest tightened.

Jason parked the pickup on the northeast side of the lot, in the bumpy overgrown grass, where the tended field ended near the trees and turned once again into a rough tangle of weeds. Upon the fairgrounds, Jason and Ruth, strolled the sod lanes as they eyed everything; as they walked, Ruth's two hands lightly encircled Jason's right biceps. Teenagers, children, old geezers, young married

couples like themselves — everyone they had ever seen and more were passing by. The place was crammed with a jumble of county fair sounds and smells: laughter, hot dogs, twangy talk, candy, screams, shouts, foamy beer. When they stopped in front of one of the rides and watched the people going round and round, screaming,

laughing, and the calliope playing. Jason looked intently at Ruth. He suddenly realized he was leading her somewhere but he didn't know where.

After two hours, Ruth had eaten cotton candy and caramel apple and greasy things and ridden the ferns wheel and watched the livestock and a little of the rodeo. She was feeling a little sick from having had all that. Ruth spotted another couple, friends of theirs and pulled Jason on to say hello. Jason hung behind her as usual, saying nothing and nodding, waving a little, watching Ruth talking with the couple; he wanted to take her into some private world where there was just the two of them and tell her - I love you. Ruth's honest features, her proud carriage, as beautiful as the blue-ribbon black and white herefords they had just seen, was the best in PooLy County, maybe the best in the world. Jason's heart pounded.

Then Jason saw it across the way — a pitching game. A crowd of people stood around the booth. Multicolored

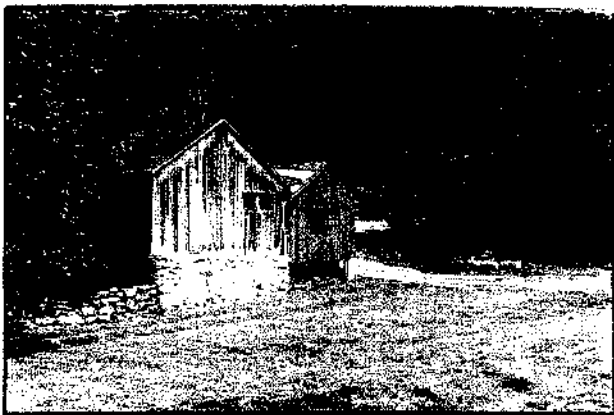
Saying It

ANDREW CHAPIN

flags, torn and dingy, hung in the air. Laughter and groans sounded as each man tried his skill. The hawker shouted, "Quarter a throw, knock down the bottles, win a prize, any prize, how 'bout you?" Jason quickly grabbed Ruth's hand and with a short tug and a fast "g'bye" tossed toward their friends, pulled her through the crowd. The bottles stood in a pyramid on a box about twelve feet behind the rope. This game looked possible for Jason; he felt he could win.

Before stepping up, he pulled Ruth before him and she looked expectantly into his eyes. He said only, "Ruth...." He quickly hugged her tight and let her go and she stepped back to watch what he was going to do. Jason turned round and traded one quarter for one hard ball. His eyes widened as he inhaled deeply and took aim at the bottles. He threw hard. The baseball hit the back of the tent with a thump. He chuckled good-naturedly, glancing around at the faces of the crowd.

Jason paid another quarter, took another ball into his fingers. He squinted his eye, wound up his arm, threw. When the ball hit, two bottles flew into the air. A wave of laughter came from the crowd. He pulled another quarter from the pocket of his blue jeans and handed it over for another ball.



This time he took most careful aim, cocking his arm back and forth slowly and gently until he wound up and threw with all his might. The ball struck the bottles square on, they all went flying except for the bottom one on the left — it teetered, and teetered round, then fell back into place. A scream shot up from the crowd.

Jason fast traded two more quarters for two more throws and angrily threw them hard and reckless. Both throws missed the bottles entirely. Cat-calls started to come at him. "Muscles can't do it." "Farm boy's just another sucker!" "Loser! Loser! Ha-ha-ha!" Jason rolled-up his sleeves, freeing his thick biceps. He unbuttoned the top of his shirt and the elaborate tattoo above his heart - purple and red letters spelling out RUTH - showed,

rising and falling with each of his deep breaths.

Ruth clutched her arms about her; she quietly called out, "Jason," but he didn't hear. Sweat beaded-up on Jason's forehead. He paid another quarter while the crowd muttered, waiting to see what he would do. He shifted his weight back and forth from one foot to the other, wound up, and threw wildly and when his ball missed the bottles and hit the back of the tent - thump - the crowd screamed - "Ha-ha-ha, told you, just another sucker who can't do it!" Jason turned, shouting at the hawker, "you...." Ruth turned and vomited a little on the grass. Jason raced to her side, led her through the crowd, into the parking lot and to the car.

He started the car and turned to look at her. "Ruth?"

She said, "Let's go home." They drove toward the house.

The night air was clear and stars burned in the high, black sky. The truck's windows were open and the cool steady rush of wind through the cab helped Ruth feel better. Once at home, Jason put her to bed, kissing her on the forehead and lying down beside her. He didn't feel anymore what he had wanted to say to her - that had been ruined. He closed his eyes in the darkness and opened them every few minutes to look at the shadows on the ceiling. When the darkness slid away enough to turn into the first sign of dawn, he left their bed and drove back to the fairgrounds. The grounds were closed up now, blinding floodlights glaring upon the booths. He went straight to the pitching game. The canvas tarp shielding the stall untied easily. His breath began to be labored and became aware of a coldness in his hands. He didn't know what to do with his hands, they seemed thick calloused things.

He picked up a ball and clenched it to his palm. He looked cleanly at the bottles, still piled as before, calculating the point of impact and eyeballed a line back from it, to his ball. Instantly, his cocked arm shot forward, forcing the ball straight to the mark, striking the bottles and sending them spinning off of the table on his first try. His heart leapt for an instant in joy but hung for a moment and then landed on surprise. He strode across the boundary, up to the table. He looked down. He kicked it lightly, "Hmmmph." He kicked the table harder, overturning it. His hands became fists. His heart began to pound, his veins throbbed, his mouth opened and when he threw back his head and a roar exploded. He staggered, swinging his arms, groping to pull things down. He reached for the fabric of the booth and yanked it, tearing canvas from its frame. He grabbed more and more stumbling and kicking things out of the way. He jumped up and grabbed a 2 by 4 of the booth frame, and pulled it down. He swung it to smash the light fixture; he swung it to smash the table.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

The Fragility of Flowers

I, CLAYTON WOOD

*Billions of tiny flowers
like struck match sticks flare
and cover Himalayan pass like an ocher robe
draped over bare knees.*

*A strong breeze from between peaks
like breath from puffed cheeks
blows. The flowers flicker,
prostate themselves, and are saved.*

*The monk within
the monastery cloistered in the cliff
bows to a dung thatched wall
patching the patches of his robe by candlelight.*

*A bowl of butter tea steams untouched
his hands perform the mundane mudra,
his entire attention to sewing
the worn wool whole again.*



T. CLAYTON WOOD, CC'96, is a double major in English and Religion. He studied poetry with Nicholas Christopher in the Writing Program and wrote *The Fragility of Flowers* while hiking in the Himalayas

Kentucky, 1915

STEVEN PAGE

*Down in the mine his lamp
lights the swirling black dust
As he swings his pick with
youthful vigor*

*Until his muscles ache and he
heaves for breath
While looking over at an
old man of thirty-eight*

*Who works beside him and
matches his output
Swing for swing but
coughs like a dog*

*Gagging on grass on a
sunny summer afternoon.
When he returns home he picks
up his son,
And gives him a kiss on the cheek,
leaving a black*

*Smear that contrasts his
pale skin which
His wife gently wipes
away with her apron.*

*He sits at the table and
spoons beans
With hands that
never come clean,*

*And watches his son
eat while sitting
Upon a raised chair, suppressing a
cough that grinds up from his chest*

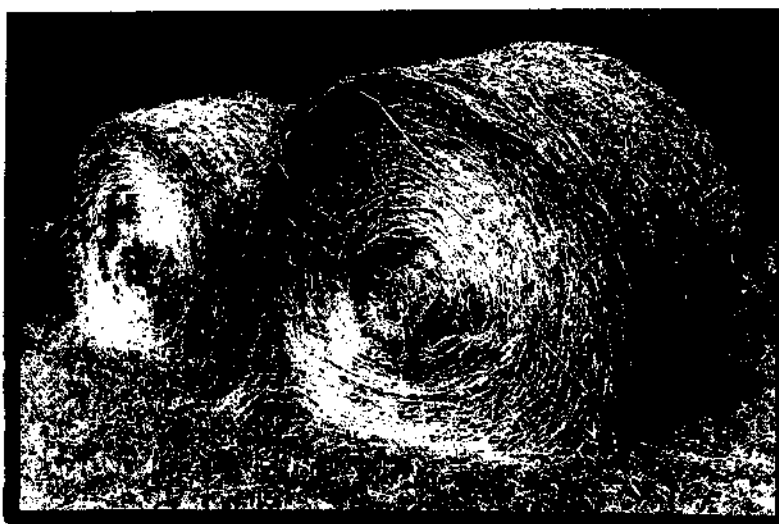


PHOTO BY DAVID MELLINS

STEVEN PAGE enrolled in GS after traveling the globe serving Corps and country. His grandfather was a coal miner.

Eurydice Speaks

PAOLA SCARPELLINI CROTTS

*/ don' f mean to be ungrateful
but I
once savage-eyed and wild-voiced
am silenced in darkness
while, up above,
he bathes in musical light.*

*Yes
I've heard the story
from his own lips:
 Poor man
 so heart-broken when I died
 that, living, he came to get me out!*

This is what I know.

*One noon he sent me to fetch water.
The brook had overflowed
I slipped
and as my ankle grazed a rock
a water moccasin struck
then coiled around my shin and pulled me down.
Waves swirled my screams.
When the serpent released me
here I was
shadow whirling among shadows.*

*At first I raged against my fate -
I was mid-stream when felled
hungry still for pleasure.
When I paused
darkness was thinning around a sound.
As I rushed to encircle its vibrations
at their source I heard his triumphant song:
 He'd risked all to find me
 he would rescue me
 all I had to do was follow
 gratefully
 silently.*

I followed.

*We moved upwards
his serenade opening two paths -
one ahead to frothy light
the other to my core.
With every step I grew solid.
Hearing my heartbeat I rejoiced -
love was returning me to sweet life.*

*He sensed my change
and though he'd warned me that he was not to touch me
until the heavens domed high above us,
his steps shortened to lessen the distance between us
and his words grew seductive
kindling his own ardor.*

*When moonbeams shone across the path ahead
his song wavered.
Arms outstretched
he turned imperiously towards my footsteps
and called me to him.*

*I so yearned to lie beneath the wind-strewn stars
to embrace him on sun-washed sands
that I knelt and spoke.
I pleaded
reminded him to wait
for our eternal union.*

*He struck me and called me ungrateful
then forced me down
to satisfy his urge.
Unmindful of the air's increasing density
and of my disintegration
he plunged me back to dense nothingness.*

*And when he realized he'd lost me once again
he trembled.
Not because he'd doomed all mortals
no - not that
nor from any pity for my fate
but because he'd lost his wife
his servant
his slave
that physical convenience that was me.*

*Now no music can win his way back to my side
though I yearn
for color
for sound
the very things he charms.
I will not let him draw me out
Though if he could
no one would have to journey here
sunshine could caress us all
in tune with endless cycles of rebirth.*

*Here I am
here I stay
for now I see:
Trapped though I am down below
Trapped I would be up above.*

PAOLA SCARPELLINI CROTTS, GS '95, majored in Italian and Comparative Literature. Her travel plans do not include Hates.

On buying a lunchbox in October

NANCY ROSS

Becky tells me that tomorrow Jordan can stay until 1:00. To bring his lunch.

I ask a woman in the pizza place where to buy a lunchbox. She looks like a perfect mother. She tells me I should try McKay drugs on 6th Avenue and I go over there and when I ask where the lunchboxes are they say they're sold out.

In Woolworth's, there are about five but none can both open and shut.

In Payless, the thermos of the Barney lunchbox is stained with something that looks like coffee.

In a hardware store in the 90's there are three lunchboxes, all the same. They are \$4.99 and have a metal clasp instead of a plastic one but the picture is of an intergalactic lion and space invader with a long whip.

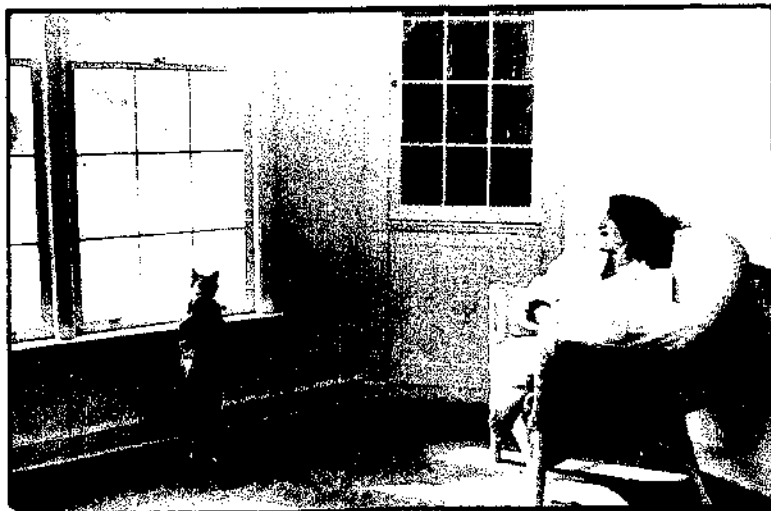
At Kid's Korner I have to check my bag and am given number 15 on a white piece of paper. They send me to the very front, in the girl's department where they are not lunchboxes, they are pencil kits.

In a hardware store on Broadway between 105th and 106th the lunchbox they show me is the kind that I used for steamed food, rice, I'm not exactly sure what but not what I'll be making for Jordan. I've planned his first lunch: two cream cheese and raisin bread sandwiches, juice and a pear.

At the stationary store at the corner of 106th and Broadway a pink Barbie lunchbox, wrapped in plastic, is held out for my inspection and when I say the word, boy, is hastily withdrawn.

In the Korean store that sells lottery tickets, the last store, the lunchboxes are different: two in the shape of cats, one yellow, one blue. I buy a bright yellow plastic lunchbox. On the case are two bears, a girl bear and a boy bear. They look Japanese. It has a red strap for carrying, a cardboard card on the snap to write Jordan's name. With tax it comes to \$23.97. I just have enough money.

There is a matching sandwich case with the same two Japanese looking bears, the girl bear is wearing a sailor dress. I put cut up apples in the top part, grapes in the bottom part. I write Jordan's name on the cardboard card.



PHOTOS CREDITS

ELLEN GOLDBERG, GS'98, majors in Writing and Literature. Grew up in New York, co-founded the independent poetry workshop *Hudson Pier Poets*.

DAVID MELLINS, GS'93, majored in Religion and is now a grad-student in the Middle-Eastern and Asian Languages and Culture Program. David was born in New York.

HERMIA NELSON, front and back cover; pages 3-5, 7, 12, 16, 19, 20, 27, 29 and 33.

MATT STAFFORD, GS'97, SWM seeks female companionship for walks in the park; reading Dickens, Keats, and Donne; then hot shags on the floor. Then you have to leave. Box # 1371.

Two Poems For Zach Maddry (1973 - 1995)

1.

DACIA GRAYBER

*the death
of 22 years
comes unglued over the phone.*

*the cat chases a roach
the sky contains another ghost now.*

*a lifetime of novels
gothic bare-foot love stories
crashing symphonies of the Pacific
caught between the ash of a cigarette
crumples helpless to the floor.*

*first snow has fallen
without you,
city flickers, dies, reignites.*

2.

*in love with the air
above the city
orange and voluptuous*

*hung like a vision of indigo beyonds
thick as a kiss*

*reeking the pungency of trainyards
decay of matter
and the birth of desire*

a rotting log seduced him.



DACIA GRAYBER is a GS sopho-junior from Cambridge, New York. When not writing, she teaches rock-climbing to eight-year-olds and works as the Muriel Rukeyser Poetry Wall intern at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

The Pigeon

You walk outside of your building. It's another freezing day, and it's so cold and the wind is blowing so hard that your ears hurt, not just the outside tips but really inside all the way to the drums. There is sun, but the wind just eats the light and your eyes are watering now, and you go to wipe your eyes but you have on wool gloves, and you scratch the soft under-eye part and a piece of wool hair catches on your contact, and you blink some more and your eyes water more and you can barely see the sign change to "walk" across the street. You step over the brown ice at the ramp, and start down the concrete of 120th street. You like this street because there aren't as many people as Amsterdam and the ones that are don't look at you anyway, only the guys in delivery trucks and the Con-Ed men half submerged in the manhole on the right. The wind blows right through your fleece scarf that your brother gave you for Christmas and the wool coat missing one button and pounces on your bare stomach under a cotton turtleneck. You are looking down towards the concrete now, trying to pace two steps between every crack, every partition, and you almost get run over by a guy on a bike delivering Domino's pizza. You look up and the wind blurs your eyes again but this time you just let the tearing flow down over your cheeks and you worry for a second that they might freeze. As you look up, there is this big brown UPS truck on the right of you, just sitting there looking lonely without a driver, and this pigeon practically falls out of the sky, screams at a free fall into the side of the truck. The guy delivering pizza stops, it makes such a loud noise, as the pigeon is ripped into pieces by the force of the fall. It doesn't even make a noise, just silently blows up right in front of you. There are blood and pigeon feathers on the side of the truck and right at the base of the truck, most of the pigeon's body and its twisted neck— steam rising in the cold off the carcass. You almost stop, almost completely stop and stare and give a eulogy to the pigeon, because right in front of you, right in front of your feet, rests its left wing. A wing, just silent and perfect on the concrete, no blood, no bone and tendons, just the gray and white and iridescent green-purple feathers, spread still in flight. The delivery boy looks up at your face red and wet and says Geez, lady, it's just a pigeon.

NON HODIË

JAMES CHRISTOPHER SMETANA



JAMES CHRISTOPHER SMETANA, GS'97, majors in Classical Studies and is anxiously waiting to graduate so he can pump gas at Texaco.

Tía Betty

NANCY ROSS

*Tía Betty lives in Santa Anita
Club de Golf
on the side of a hill
in her white house with white marble floors.
Eight hundred select casas.
Eight hundred select families.
Down the block, an executive for Hershey's; one of Motor Oil.*

*Tfo Fernando and his beautiful wife, Betty, with green eyes.
Una cubita? A drink? she asks.
And she rolls her eyes, mocking herself.*

*Tía Betty tells me: If a wife feels happy her husband will feel happy as well.
She wanders in an alcoholic gaze.
Becomes more generous, slower.
Circles; orbits.
Her green eyes glitter.*

NANCY ROSS is a post-graduate non-degree student in the School of General Studies. She expresses herself through her poetry and Play-Doh.

Grandma

ANNA KAINEN

*Grandma does not
Sit by the phone
Waiting for it to ring
To her from her, or from him.
She is too busy
Chasing a rainbow
In search of her dream...
No need to get up to give her a seat,
She's not feeble, nor sick,
She's doing her yoga
Bending and twisting
Each morning at six...
You will not catch her falling asleep
In front of the tube,
She's busy reading and writing
And doing her "thing"...
Grandma does not lament,
"The children have fled,
I'm all alone."
She does not wallow in Self pity,
She learned to fend...
She has no time to tarry,
She puts on the smile and is off
For the day,
She carries a load of twelve
Credits or more...
Grandma is going to college
In search of her dream...*



PHOTO BY ELLEN C. GOLDBERG

ANNA KAINEN entered City College at the age of 62 and earned a BA in Creative Writing in 1980. In 1988 and 1989 she received two fellowships at GS. Now visually impaired, she is writing her memoirs with the help of Abigail Regier (GS'96).

Lemon Meringue Pie

EDIE CAREY

We got inspired. It was lousy weather, and the rain wouldn't let up enough for us to go out, so we accepted our indoor sentence and donned our aprons. We decided on lemon meringue pie. Mom dashed to the convenient store for last minute ingredients while I made room in the kitchen for our collective culinary genius that was soon to overflow.

We set to work, I beating the egg whites and Mom pressing and smoothing the crust. We rolled our sleeves up past our elbows, and tied our hair back with two elastic bands that Mom had dug out of the bottomless pits that were her bathrobe pockets. When our cat Honey ran away, my sister and I used to make sick jokes that Honey was probably lost somewhere deep in the cluttered caverns of our mother's pockets. But she would just chuckle and snort and go on stuffing them with stray blue plastic barrettes and lonely socks.

As we mixed sifted and stirred, we swung our larger-than-average hips and belted out to Gregory Abbot's "Shake You Down." We would always alternate parts: first I would croon the syrupy solo and then Mom would sing the breathy harmony, and then we'd switch. We belonged in Sweeney Todd, singing as we baked our pie, though ours contained no body parts, just a cat hair or two.

We finished our masterpiece, having ever-so-delicately spread the fluffy meringue over the lemon gel. We gently slid it into the oven, neither of us daring to breathe until the oven door was shut.

Once it was safe, Mom turned up the volume on the stereo and we attacked the kitchen with new fat, yellow sponges. We danced as we worked and the kitchen was immaculate in no time.

We collapsed, giggling painfully, onto her five-dollar bed. I raced to the bathroom and barely made it. We Chase women have always had a problem controlling our bladders when it comes to laughing. I headed back towards her room, still giggling and sighing and rubbing the ache from my belly. I bounced onto the bed where Mom was already glued to the old western on TV. We picked at day-old popcorn, and I tried my damndest to understand what it was that mother loved so much about westerns. They all looked the same to me.

The oven timer buzzed. I yelped, "I'll get it!" and headed to the kitchen. I cracked open the oven door: "Oh, shit!" I lost it. I fell to the floor, bowled over by new, even more powerful waves of giggles, clutching my already sore stomach. I came dangerously close to rolling underneath the hot door, but caught myself in time. Mom appeared in the doorway, wearing a quizzical look. "Mom—go look in the oven!" I gasped. She stepped over me, lying prone on the floor, and peered in the oven with her usual squint. I watched her expression and when the squint turned into a grin, I knew she had seen. She snorted and her hand flew between her knees as she bent into customary knock-kneed squat. Just her laugh was enough to spark another round of horrible giggling in me, and I rolled away from her, still curled up like a larva on the hard wood floor.

When our laughing finally decrescendoeed, and we could come up for breath, I sprawled out, limp and exhausted. Every few seconds an aftershock of giggles rippled through me. I finally sat up and nodded at Mom to hand me the potholders. I carefully removed the pie from the oven and placed it on the counter. The meringue had shrunk to the size of a half dollar. All that remained was a tiny white circle floating on a sea of gelatinous yellow.

We grabbed two kitchen spoons, and sat back down in front of the TV and attacked our creation. I devoured the meringue in one little bite.

EDIE CAREY, BC'96, majors in Italian. This story makes her hungry.

Summer at the Ashford Savings and Loan, 1967.

PHILEMON YEN

Granted, a small town bank isn't exactly the most romantic place in the world, but somehow in the thirty years or so that have gone by since I met Elias Hershey, then twenty-four years old, the Ashford Savings and Loan has grown in my memory into nearly magical proportions. Certain aspects of it—the smell of paper and dust on entering the building, at once musty and crisp (the smell of men), the orderly rows of oak tables on the far side of the main office, how warmly they took in the afternoon sunlight—have been so often redeveloped, so saturated in the dyes of feeling and reminiscence, that I often wonder at this age whether they have crossed over into imagination. The distinction between them is slight, at any rate: after a time, the imagination always threatens to transfigure memory; facts as they were no longer maintain their former solidity, and old images always somehow intensify under the pressure of recollection, especially emotional recollection. But I realize I'm digressing.

I moved back to Georgia in 1967, when I was twenty-three and several listless years out from the women's college I attended in upstate New York. Ashford is a small cotton town in the southeast corner of the state where I was born, and where my family had made a comfortable living running a quiet mill on the Ogeechee River, with about two dozen sheep and, of course, the obligatory peanut crop. After studying literature for four years and failing to find a steady writing job in New York, I decided to move back home that summer and take the farm over from my rapidly aging father (my mother having died several years earlier following a rather severe bout with food poisoning). Dad at this time was for all practical purposes an invalid, though a gentle, surpassingly pleasant one. I spent the first month and a half of the summer repairing the mill and the fencing, generally doing odd-jobs that had been postponed for months or years following Mom's death. And it was surprisingly refreshing, really, for once to wake up in the morning

and have a full day's worth of task for the hands and the body, to wander out into the fields by myself in the moist Southern heat and see nothing but landscape. After four years of absorption in books, of academic analysis and shuttling back and forth from class to class or office to office, living back in Ashford was at first like a swift tonic for some sickness I never realized I had.

Two months passed, however, and I became extremely lonesome. My father spent long, reticent days on our front porch looking out into the fields, and his part in our rare conversations consisted either of small talk concerning the farm and local events, or, while holding an especially distant, abstracted gaze at the horizon or the table setting, releasing a quietly devastating, nostalgic sentence or two about my mother. Usually it came unexpectedly in the form of an oblique correction, as when I once brought him tea in the living room and he commented, while sitting back on the couch and staring into the old magazines on the coffee table, that mother, when she used to bring him tea, had often made the 'One lump or two?' joke after tucking a small hammer visibly in her apron string. Naturally whatever tea I brought in would lose all possible therapeutic value after that: I would laugh a little and set

the tray down, only to collect it untouched an hour or so later. At any rate, the variations and manifestations of this routine between us were far too numerous, and basically heartbreaking, for me to recall them exhaustively now. In short, conversation with him became nearly unbearable, despite his sweetness, and by the end of June I was writing almost a half dozen letters per day to friends up North.

One afternoon I drove into town to close down my parents' bank account and open up my own. The heat that day was enormous, and I remember as I stepped into the bank the soothing blended sound of flies buzzing in long ellipses with the soft whup-whup of the overhead fan. Isaiah Winston, the bank manager and Sunday school teacher, was



The heat that day was enormous, and I remember as I stepped into the bank the soothing blended sound of flies buzzing in long ellipses with the soft whup-whup of the overhead fan.

asleep and softly snoring with his feet crossed up on the back desk and his large, kind hands folded across the round of his stomach. All the other desks were empty—presumably everyone was at home, napping in front of an electric fan or drinking iced tea—and as I made my way past the gumball machine to the sound of my footsteps on the wooden floorboards, I was surprised to hear someone shuffling behind the teller's window from his desk.

My reaction the first time I saw Elias was astonishment: as he rose up from behind the counter he was closing the top button on, of all things, a brown, wool plaid, three piece suit with a paisley blue bow tie! It was surely, given the hundred-plus degree heat and stunning humidity, about three layers beyond conceivable human endurance. (I myself was wearing a linen summer dress with a yellow sun hat at the time and fanning myself incessantly with a local newspaper.) He stood up in his small but lanky frame and brushed his brown hair down with one hand while combing the desk for his glasses with the other. When I had recovered from my momentary shock at his attire, and as I watched him clumsily slipping on his glasses and brushing down the wrinkles of his suit with three hurried downward motions of the hands, I found myself smiling affectionately at having caught him so drowsily flustered after dozing off on the job. He looked across at me and gave a gentle, embarrassed laugh, then turned to look over at his manager's desk. "Whew," he said to me, "it's hot today. You must be the only one awake." I replied that I probably was, but I couldn't see how he possibly could've slept in that wool suit. He smiled again, looking back over at Mr. Winston sleeping, and said "Yeah - I get cold a lot. And there's also the issue of appropriate business attire. Would you like a glass of water?"

Elias came around the row of teller windows, shyly introducing himself to the muffled clicks of his shoe heels on the wood, adding that he'd only been in the town for three weeks but loved how friendly and idyllic it was here, how people actually sat on their porches and drank lemonade and all that. He was working here for the summer; his dad was a friend of Mr. Winston's. He closed the waist-high counter door softly, so as not to wake the manager, and walked over to the water cooler next to one of the large, wood-paneled windows looking onto the street. There was then a long, contemplative pause as he stood in a sunbeam next to the water cooler, a paper cup in his hand, gazing out the window. "But I just got drafted a few days ago, actually, and I'll probably go in August." Another short pause elapsed before he added out loud, almost as an afterthought, "They're carrying crates of oranges into the drug store across the street. What the hell are they going to do with all those oranges?"

I suppose, considering that he's just woken up, and the recent news about going to war, it isn't surprising that Elias started when I told him I was sorry - about the war, I meant, - and looked at me as if he were surprised to find another person in the office. He smiled a little and wandered over to one of the five large desks lined up perpendicular to the windows, pulling out a chair and taking a seat. He leaned forward on his elbows and wiped his right hand back and forth once across the yellow desk pad, slowly, inspecting its broad smoothness. "Thanks," he said. "No one knows about it yet - not even my dad. I've been sitting up all night thinking, thinking, you know, going nowhere with it." Another laugh. "Have you seen the stars out here at night? I think I saw the whole Milky Way lined up last night."

As I walked over and pulled a chair opposite his, he stood up and apologized for not offering me a seat. "Don't worry," I told him, "I'm not that keen on Southern courtesy anyway. And the stars are amazing. I used to sleep outside sometimes with my dad, during the summer, and we'd count them and look for shooting stars for hours. He used to pick out some random set of stars and make up a constellation name for them, telling me he studied Astronomy in high school. So there was the Horseshoe constellation, which, you know, was supposed to be lucky, and the Girl Riding Pony constellation, which was supposed to be me. And the Peanut constellation. I stopped believing him when he told me about the Pony Manure constellation, which I was supposed to clean up when I got old enough. It was actually Cassiopeia."

I remember Elias really laughed for first time then, his eyes crinkling at me across the desk. He drew a black streamlined pen out from its holder on the desk set and began doodling on the paper. He started drawing a little underwater landscape and told me that he and his dad used to go camping too. "In the Adirondacks. My mom passed away when I was twelve, and we'd go up for the weekend or something, just by ourselves. It was nice." He's already drawn the waves at the top of the page and a rolling ocean floor, with seaweed and a few fish, and was now starting a fisherman in a row-boat, his line in the water dangling before a fish with a cartoon worm on its hook. "I suppose I should call him."

Our conversation kept up for very long time, I remember, before we both looked up at the white bank clock on the far wall. It was almost five o'clock. And Mr. Winston had somehow wakened from his nap and left the office without out noticing; Elias mused he must have slipped out the back with all the money when no one was watching.

Months later, as the summer was ending and Elias got ready for Officer Training School, we spent many nights out in a sleeping bag beside the mill. The night before he left we retraced some of our walks along the cotton farms; at dinner he told my dad how grateful he was they'd met, how he wish he could've met my mother - Mrs. Dalton - she must've been a wonderful woman. He spent his last night upstairs in my room, and when I woke up late the next morning he was dressed in a navy double-breasted wool suit with a red and yellow necktie, sitting at my chair, his suitcase beside him. I sat up in bed and watched him for a minute. Elias turned to look at me, then slowly back out the window. Eyes narrowed, he was gazing into the distance. "You know, I said goodbye to Mr. Winston at the bank today. It was all swept clean, there was a cake and lemonade and everyone there had put up these banners and decorations. 'Good Luck In Vietnam, Elias!' 'Your Country is Proud of You, Elias!' It was like my birthday. When I left he walked me out alone and told me about the day you and I met—remember he was sleeping in the back? He said he listened to us for a few minutes and even got a cup of water. Then he just left us."

I smiled; "Mr. Winston's a nice man." Yes, Elias agreed, and walked over to me, and we said goodbye for many minutes. And then he left. When I got up from bed about an hour later, I looked at my desk and saw on it a single, perfect Georgian peach, and beneath it, Elias' underwater drawing, complete now with a scuba diver and sunken treasure chest.

PHILEMON YEN is currently a senior Philosophy major at Columbia College. He hopes to continue writing short stories and poems after graduation, and begin working on a novel set in post-Cultural Revolution Beijing.

Surfing The Web

by Costanza Rizzacasa d'Orsogna

Granted, everybody knows how to access the libraries and to send an E-mail, but two years after the introduction of ColumbiaNet terminals, many of us still struggle to find their way around in the WorldWide Web. Surprise! it's easy and fun. How? Keep reading.

In many science classes, the Web has recently been adopted as an educational tool. Professors urge students to make full use of it for information about required readings, exams, the grading system, etc. Let's say you are taking Geology V1001, *Dinosaurs and the History of Life*, with Professor Olsen, and that you have been absent a few times. In view of the upcoming final, the lecture notes for the classes you have missed would be very helpful to you. Unfortunately, you still don't have a clue on how to get to them. What do you do? It's simple. From the Columbia home page—the one with the nice picture of Low Library—click on *Course Materials*. If a little hand with a pointing finger appears, you are on the right track, and the course materials will soon be shown. Now scroll down until you get to Geological Sciences, then click on *Dinosaurs and the History of Life*. And, voila! There it is in front of you. The Dinosaurs home page gives you the time and the place of the class, as well as other useful information. Now, in order to get the lecture notes for, say, Thursday, April 4, click on *Syllabus and Lecture Notes*, then scroll down until you get to April 4. Click now on the lecture number on the left of the page—in this case it's "20"—and here they are, the notes for "Hot Blooded Dinosaurs?" Hey, wait a second. What's happening here? There are no lecture notes for April 4! Don't panic. It simply means that your instructor hasn't put them on the Web yet.

If you want a list of the readings assigned for this lecture, just move the mouse to the top of the page, and click on Back to return to the syllabus. Again, scroll down until you get to April 4, and click on *readings*. If now you'd like to send an E-mail to Professor Olsen, click on Back again to go to the Dinosaurs home page, and then scroll down to the bottom of

the page. Click on the professor's *E-mail* address, and there you have it. By the way, Professor Olsen loves to get E-mail from students, and will be very happy to answer you. If from here you want to exit the Dinosaurs course materials, simply move the mouse to the top of the page, and click on **Home**.

Wait. Don't go away! The fun has just begun. From the Web you can get practically any information you want. Say you want to know what's going on around campus—i.e. clubs, get-togethers, parties, etc. From the home page of Columbia, scroll down and click on *Extracurricular*. You'll find an interesting list of hundreds of groups, fraternities, and athletic clubs. If you want to know more about *The Observer* and its cool editors—like me—go to *School/Independent* and click on *Observer*. You'll get the covers of the previous issues as well as an E-mail address and a hotline number for questions, comments, and all the derogatory remarks you can come up with! But if you want to find out what's really hot at Columbia,... go ask Alice! Just kidding. *Alice* is the popular interactive service answering your health questions, and it can be accessed by clicking on *Hot!* from the Columbia home page. *Hot!* also contains the

ninth edition of the *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* as well as over 100,000 poems. Finally, if you want to know about campus job opportunities, simply go **Home** and click on *Jobs* for a list of all the work-study and part-time positions available. The Columbia Job Opportunities Web Site is a great way to find a job quickly and easily, and it offers a search by job title, location, date posted, and pay level. The Web also provides information on a variety of services, such as *Registration and Grades*, *Billing Payments and Financial Aid*, and, last but not least, *Where Do you Shop and Why*. You can also access the *Nynex Interactive Yellow Pages*, discover interesting facts about New York, and find out the current weather.

There's information about everything you can possibly think of on the WorldWide Web. So, what are you waiting for? Take the plunge! For help while using the Web, contact AcIS by calling 854-4854, or send an E-mail to consultant@columbia.edu. 📧



***From the Web
you can get
practically any
information
you want.***

Manhattan's Oasis

by Robert Basile

I am under the conviction that the friendliest doormen in New York City are found in the surrounding blocks of Grammercy Park. And why wouldn't they be? They are always tipping their caps in the direction of Manhattan's single remaining private park, the gates to which only residents of the surrounding buildings hold keys. With its beautiful old trees, flowering spring plantings, squirrels and the occasional nanny, the park is reminiscent of a quiet London square. But don't ask me about it, anyone of Grammercy's affable doorman can tell you the history.

Founded in 1831 by a real estate developer, the private park was laid out to increase the value of 66 lots that he owned nearby. That this strategy was successful is evidenced by the quality of the ornate 19th century buildings that still surround the square-elaborate structures like The Player's Club (Edwin Booth's former home), The National Arcs Club (designed by Calvert Vaux in a Gothic revival style) and the Victorian birthplace of Theodore Roosevelt.

The air of dignified elegance which permeates the heart of Grammercy Park is further reinforced by historic Styvuesant Square (located to the southeast at 15th street). The square boasts the Friends Meeting House and brownstone St. George's Church where J.P. Morgan once worshipped.

While maintaining its historical and stately presence, Grammercy Park is propelled by the recent emergence of its surrounding areas (its boundaries run west from 2nd Avenue across to Park Avenue and south from 34th Street to Union Square Park). Third Avenue in the Twenties is surging with the Irish-American Pub. And although a good pint of Guinness can be found at any of them, McCormack's and Fitzgerald's stand out as the most authentic, bringing full crowds in on Saturday mornings to cheer the British and European Soccer Leagues. Irish-

American culture may dominate this ten block stretch, but it doesn't dominate the broad range of culture in the area.

One can enjoy New York's best live rock-a-billy show at the Rodeo Bar. (There's no bull to ride, but they do ask kindly for only cowboys to enter). Going even further south - past the border - one can shake his hips to the sounds of Mexico Lindo's famous quartet while drinking a splendid margherita. Grammercy Park even has Oktoberfest. Rolf's, the area's most tacky yet vivacious restaurant, celebrates this German festival of

life by elaborating its already lush inside decor so abundantly that one loses a sense of where the walls start and the ceilings end. Finally, bring it all back home at Pete's Tavern, New York's oldest original bar, which first opened its doors in 1864. All the furniture and fixtures from the time of Abraham Lincoln's presidency still remain.

It is the quiet and peaceful atmosphere resonating in the heart of Grammercy Park that initially draws both New Yorkers and tourists. An oasis in what is all too

often an overcrowded and overbearing city, Grammercy Park offers a more tranquil community - ideally situated in the middle of the hustle and bustle. Brunch at Friend of a Farmer, a slice of New England placed among an enclave of small townhouses, is perhaps the most suitable start to a Sunday Afternoon Grammercy Park tour. After tasting the most wonderful assortment of homemade baked breads, try a midday stroll along the quiet four block stretch of Irving Place to the main gates of the private park. Just remember not to lose the key you worked so hard to con from that seemingly too pleasant doorman. ♣



ROBERT BASILE

GS '96, after graduation plans to explore the Australian Outback in search of the ultimate Aborigine hang-gliding partner to circumnavigate the globe.

Pain and Community

Mary Rowlandson's Narrative of 1682

by Rebecca Garden

Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God...* (published in 1682), is an account that begins with the destruction of her home and her village of Lancaster, Massachusetts by a Narragansett attack during King Philip's war in 1677. She describes the death of her child, who was wounded in the battle and died later on the trail, and being separated from her other children.

Rowlandson's descriptions of her grief are sometimes overshadowed by descriptions of the pain she felt, the pain of her bullet wound, hunger, the cold, the stiffness in her legs, and her exhaustion. But that narrative tells us that she finds comfort in a bible that a Narragansett gives her. The words of the bible seem to apply directly to her experience. They make her aware that before she was taken captive she had been neglectful of religious concerns. For Rowlandson, it seems that the realization of her sinfulness could only come with the destruction of her material comfort. And that comfort is annihilated; her world explodes in violence, in blood and fire. She tells us:

Some in our house were fighting for their lives, other wallowing in their blood, the house on fire over our heads, and the bloody heather ready to knock us on the head if we stirred out....The bullets flying thick, one went through my side, and the same (as would seem) through the bowels and hand of my dear child in my arms. Once of my elder sister's children, named William, had then his leg broken, which the Indians perceiving, they knocked him on the head. Thus were we butchered by those merciless heathen, standing amazed, with the blood running down to our heels.

Her pain and grief increase on the trail as the Narragansetts take her north to a town where she will be ransomed back to the English eleven weeks later. Within the following year or so, she writes the narrative of her captivity but constructs it specifically as a conversion narrative, an established Puritan form that describes and interprets the profound spiritual revelation that brings with it the conviction that one is chosen by God to be among the community of saints. Rowlandson comes to view

her suffering within the frame of the Bible and within the frame of Puritanism, that is, she comes to view her pain as necessary for spiritual growth.

Mitchell Breitwieser speculates about the degree to which Increase Mather, a powerful leader of the Puritan church-state, influenced the way Rowlandson wrote about her experiences. He explains that the effects of the war, the devastation of the

settlements and the loss of life, put pressure on the theocratic elite to produce a rationale for the escalation of the fighting. Many of New England's political and economic backers in England saw the clergy as having badly mismanaged the war. Therefore Rowlandson's narrative can be seen as an attempt at damage control. Within the frame of Puritan conversion, the settlers not only deserved the destruction, they should have been grateful for it. (An important parallel to this interpretation of suffering is that of the African American interpellated by Calvinism. Phillis Wheatley and Olaudah Equiano among many other early African American and African English writers express this convention of seeing the middle passage as a release from the bondage of paganism, which implies that they be grateful for being made a slave.)

The most basic form of punishment is physical punishment. What I see in Mary Rowlandson's narrative is a situa-

tion in which, at a most basic level, the wholeness of the body, its health, is destroyed. That destruction creates a state of interpretive flux: it can be interpreted in terms of Puritanism as punishment for straying from the path of righteousness and as an opportunity to be tested, or it can drive Rowlandson beyond the boundaries of Puritanism and English culture. The destruction of Rowlandson's physical well-being threatens her perception of herself—as living and working on a farm in Lancaster, caring for her children, living with and loving her husband, her sister and her sister's family—and it threatens the English settlement. Rowlandson assimilates Narragansett culture during her captivity. She comes to like the taste of their food, to learn their language, to enter into their economy by working in exchange

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PHOTO BY DAVID MELLINS

Looking For a Job?

by Dixie Reinhardt

The GS Mentorship/Internship Program was established in 1995 to support graduating GS seniors who are embarking on a job search or contemplating a new career path. The '95/'96 pilot-program includes a diverse range of 25 GS students, many of whom are entering corporate America or a more mainstream business career for the first time. Developed by myself and managed together with Barbara Tischler, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, the program is built around the particular needs of GS students who are likely to have worked before, but who need help in successfully negotiating today's highly competitive job market.

While there is no typical profile of the evolving pool of mentors, among the pilot group are seven investment bankers, several finance executives, a senior law partner specializing in securities law, a senior law partner in charge of his firm's real estate division, an executive vice-president and partner of a major commercial real estate firm, several publishing executives, the executive director of a high profile arts organization, the executive producer of a Los Angeles-based TV comedy, a record producer and engineer, a founding partner and senior agent of a large Los Angeles-based talent agency, the Associate Director of a social services agency, a former CEO of a multinational transportation firm, a senior children's book editor, marketing executives, and an executive in the cosmetics industry.

In addition to providing mentors, the program will begin to develop a series of new internships in addition to some of last semester's original five which may be

available again this year. Prior internships included two for a non-profit theater group managing their hospital entertainment and children's Saturday programs, one with a social service agency that permitted the protege to build his or her own program within the larger mandate of the agency after approval of the student's program proposal, and a casting director trainee position in Hollywood with a network TV series.

To get started a GS student should:


- 1) fill out a short application available



in 408 Lewisohn Hall, (which can also be requested by E-mailing Barbara Tischler at blt@columbia.edu); 2) complete a personal interview to determine goals as well as a preliminary plan of action. Students are then referred to a potential mentor. One-on-one "teams" are cemented only after the student protege and the executive or professional mentor agree to work together. The team relationship requires a minimum commitment of one semester from both parties. Depending on the individuals, teams are encouraged to extend their partnership beyond the minimum commitment if the relationship is working well. The students' success with the program depends on their own initiative

and determination. Mentors are successful people who got where they are because they had what it took. They are available to students because they volunteer valuable time from a busy schedule. Thus, they require the protege to make an equal commitment to the partnership. Marilyn Chariot made this commitment. Having developed a particularly good working relationship with her mentor, she was asked to interview with the Federal Reserve in Washington, D.C. Prior to the interview, her mentor (the retired CEO of the multinational mentioned above) called his old college roommate, who is now one of the senior officials at the Fed. He asked the official to help guide his protege through the process while she was being interviewed by different departments within the agency. To her surprise (as well as that of the man interviewing her), the official appeared at the end of her interview, popped his head in the door, and asked if he might take her to lunch. This student would probably excel at whatever she chooses since she works hard,

is well prepared, and has an excellent eight-year record with the military. However, jobs are often filled through personal networking, and it probably did not hurt to have a powerful and well-connected mentor who thought highly enough of her to call in a personal favor on her behalf.

If you are interested in the program, and either need to work while attending school or are preparing to graduated this year, the GS Mentorship/Internship Program welcomes your application. 

DIXIE REINHARDT

GS '96, majors in Political Science. Dixie's return to GS has added the final ingredient to her rich life, paving the road to greater accomplishments.

Confronting the Beast

Black Students out of site/out of mind at GS

by Steve Cupid Theodore

*T*his is the urgency: Live! And have your blooming in the noise of the whirlwind.

We are living in the time of an extended racial inhale. The 1994 GOP victories, and the white male backlash that they represented, ushered in a level of racialized rhetoric proliferated with racial codewording not seen since Willie Horton. The media-conspired public appetite for the spectacle of the Simpson trial—which Patricia Williams correctly predicted early last year in *The Nation* would not be satisfied by a verdict either way—quickly gave way to a chain of reactions which appeared to be self-perpetuating (“black indignation and white anger at black jubilation at Simpson’s acquittal” — H.L. Gates). In October came the Million Man March with its focus on black male behavior (read crime statistics and social woe) and Farrakhan, which caused the nation to hold its collective breath even as well-moneyed thinktanks declared the End of Racism. The new assault on affirmative action, led by the California Civil Rights Initiatives fight for inclusion on the ballot for November, and the actions of the University of California regents, typifies an approach to public policy which, while affecting diverse groups in different ways and by all measures raising California academic standards and performance, is still portrayed in stark terms of black versus white, guilt versus merit. And the March 18 decision of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in *Hopwood v. State of Texas*, which prohibits the use of race-based admissions criteria in achieving diversity at the University of Texas Law School, is set to reinvigorate the affirmative action opposition in the conflagration that is sure to come. The candidacy of Patrick

Buchanan has afforded him the opportunity to refine his race talk within legitimized debate on immigration and trade policy. Drowned out in all of this is Lani Guinier’s call for an honest national conversation on Race.

However, with all the national punditry surrounding the events of last fall, it seemed that hardly a ripple would pass through the so-called Columbia community. The period following the march was marked by one student’s letter—seemingly designed to agitate rather than illuminate, and a swiftly balming President’s letter re-affirming Columbia’s commitment to “diversity”. Organized responses to the issues raised by the march were few and uneventful. And at the School of General Studies? Nothing. Now, months later, as the movement for Ethnic Studies gains momentum, the political fissures in the relationship between the GS student body and the other undergraduate schools are beginning to show, and they seem to go beyond age differences, full- or part-time status, or life experience. They impinge on the question of our relationship to and our willingness to engage with this question of race and its discontents.

This is because the School of General Studies avoids a direct critical engagement with the issue of race. The questions of creating rather than just professing diversity, and the essentialities of minority recruitment and retention, are not confronted in any sustained, activist manner. This avoidance belies an unease about race which goes to the very heart of the GS mission. Within this suspended arena, the particularities of being black at GS can often be lost, and the interests of black students underserved. Finally, there exists no GS student organization with the function of pressing forward the interests of black

students and other students of color.

Columbia University’s multi-cultural project began in earnest in the 90s—the most visible part being the new freshman orientation with its summer reading lists, workshops on race, sexual orientation and gender issues. Yet, while the composition of the Columbia College body has certainly changed from its largely white, all-male student body of the years prior to 1983, the battle waged over issues of minority faculty hiring, new programs, the core curriculum, and now Ethnic Studies reveal a multi-culturalism that may be a mile wide but is only skin deep. Indeed, walking around campus, one may easily forget the College’s stated intention to “seek a diversity of personalities . . . and of economic, social, [and] ethnic . . . backgrounds.” (my emphasis). Regardless of its pronouncements, Columbia University has much at stake in preserving its elite status.

To hear, then, as I did very early on enrolling at the school of General Studies, that this school represented “a democratic face of an elite institution,” suggested to me more than a passing acknowledgement of both ethnic and class diversity as signifying features of the GS personae. Despite this, it is clear that each incoming class is less diverse than the last, with respect to both ethnicity and class. Part of this failure lies squarely on the shoulders of the constraints on financial aid, and its connection to the reorganization effort still under way as described in the previous edition of this magazine. However, part must also lie on the culture of avoidance of the thorny issue of racial diversity as an explicit goal.

Take, for example, the difficulty of unearthing and navigating through what exists as an affirmative action policy at

General Studies, or the University for that matter. First, no mention of ethnic diversity concerns appears in the School's admission policy statement, and it is also unclear whether or not one exists implicitly. Second, the University's Statement of Nondiscriminatory Policies lists non-discrimination under Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Education Amendments, New York Human Rights Law and Education Law, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and more. However, the words "affirmative action" appear only twice, both times with regard to policies of employment and advancement—not admission. And the University's Policy Statement On Discrimination and Harassment (pg. 212–213 of the current GS bulletin) is a hodgepodge which appears to conflate the goal of affirmative action with that of protection, under the partisan rubric of protection from "attacks by the ignorant, the foolish, the sick, the evil," and from our own "stigmatizing consideration of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, citizenship status, or Vietnam Era or disabled veteran status." In other words, affirmative action has been rewritten not as a positivist goal, but rather as an active dis-affirmation or negation of signs of difference which are by definition "stigmatizing." Wedged in between strong condemnations of intolerant conduct, the statement is designed to give the impression that members of certain groups need to be protected from their own tendencies to self-identify along group lines, yet the section still goes on to describe these categories as "qualities."

The problem is that this confusion over how to negotiate categories of difference runs counter to the real work of affirmative action—the active recruitment of qualified members of under-represented groups, and the providing of networks of support to keep them here once admitted, and to see them through to graduation. The unwillingness to engage such issues at that level of committed action reveals the failure of the liberal multi-culturalist ethos, which has struggled to accommodate affirmations of ethnic identity presented as structural challenges to white supremacist ideology.

At GS, even raising the issues of admission and retention along ethnic lines can be met with defensiveness on the part of some administrators and admissions officers. It is unclear as to whether records have been kept on attrition rates among black students at GS who are not enrolled in the HEOP program, which, not incidentally and to its enormous credit, has a higher graduation rate than the school itself. Race, and especially graduation rates broken down along racial lines, may be GS's dirtiest secret.

How exactly might this impact upon the everyday experience of the school's black students? The average profile of the GS student is fairly evident—older, often self-supporting, mainly part-time out of necessity, often foreign or immigrant, so-called "non-traditional." Most importantly, the GS student has experienced an interruption or postponement of at least one year after high school. Therefore, for most students there is this palpable sense of the call to not fail at this prodigious "second chance." To the black GS student facing a white superstructure, facing 'Homer, Herodotus, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Vergil,' and seas of young white faces, some days it can feel like the weight of Western Civilization itself.

The question then becomes one of black academic performance and societal cues, and on this issue I find the work of Claude Steele particularly instructive. Since last June, The Stanford social psychologist has been gaining in notoriety on his notion of stereotype vulnerability. His experiments generally follow the same format: Two groups of black and white undergraduates from the same college are given difficult GRE verbal-skills questions. One group is told that the exam is only meant to research "psychological factors involved in solving verbal problems," while the other group is told that the exercise is a "genuine test of your verbal abilities and limitations." In more than a dozen experiments over four years the results have been repeated. And I quote from Ethan Watters's New York Times Magazine article of September 17, 1995: "[T]he blacks who thought that they were simply solving problems performed as well as the whites (who performed equally in both situa-

tions). However, the group of black students who labored under the belief that the test could measure their intellectual potential performed significantly worse than all the other students." In addition, the results were repeatable with women susceptible to cues of "gender differences" and white men who were told that Asians outperformed them on a given math test.

Stereotype vulnerability, therefore, is the extra burden faced by stereotyped groups, in certain explicitly scholastic circumstances, to avoid confirming the negative stereotypes associated with that group. It is, in Watters's term, a *whisper of inferiority* which must be contended with precisely at the moment of great academic challenge, which can be sparked by the subtleties of cues, and can re-emerge at each new proving ground of achievement. It was the phenomenon of "highly-motivated, middle-class" black students with 1,300 S.A.T. scores graduating with 2.4 G.P.A.'s that first alerted Steele to look outside the traditional factors of discrimination, poverty and crime-ridden communities, and instead focus on the pressures toward "disidentification" in a racially polarized society that is, in Andrew Hacker's view, "separate, hostile, unequal." The good news suggested by Steele's work is that once the situational markers are removed (not having to identify race, for example, in the test-taking scenario), the vulnerability can disappear.

Reading about this work last fall helped me place my academic situation in perspective. I had come to General Studies after dropping out of NYU five years earlier, and spending the intervening period as one might expect for a young black man with two years of college. A year and a half in a law firm mailroom had brought me close to the edge. I still remember sitting across from Barbara Tischler over four years ago, confessing my failures, proclaiming my readiness for academic work, Columbia looming large as my salvation. I readily accepted the exhortations to "get A's!": I knew I could. And even as in those words, and in the "Do us Proud" that implicitly followed, could be heard the echoes of a memory of leaving my Trinidad home years earlier. For

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Hesped

for Matt Eisenfeld and Sara Duker

by Aryeh Bernstein

The morning of Sunday, February 25 was a dark morning for the Jewish people, as two suicide bombings in Israel kicked off a gruesome week-and-a-half of terror which left 61 people dead and many more seriously wounded. Our communities here were shaken very personally because two of the victims were beloved friends and shining stars from within our midst. Sara Duker graduated Summa Cum Laude last year from Barnard in Environmental Science and Matt Eisenfeld was in his second year of Rabbinical School at the Jewish Theological Seminary. The couple, each of whom was studying in Israel this year, was on a bus en route to making a trip to Jordan during vacation. Those of us who knew them well had often thought of the wedding they were inevitably to have in the future; instead, we joined to bury them together and to grieve their death. The following is a eulogy which I delivered, as a representative of the Columbia/JTS communities, at City Hall as a part of memorial tribute for the dead and show of solidarity with Israel's citizens on behalf of New York.

SPEECH BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

I must confess to you my great feeling of inadequacy, as I am faced with the horrifying task of eulogizing before this esteemed gathering—or before any gathering—two people as righteous as Sara Duker and Matt Eisenfeld.

The past week-and-a-half has been a period of utter devastation, and I know that I speak for many in my communities at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University—and for countless others in Israel—when I note that these nightmarish days have been the worst of my life. I find myself faced with the senseless deaths of over sixty brothers and sisters, two of whom were loved ones whom I had to help bury. May none of you ever have this experience.

What I am looking for now...I don't know. Not answers, because there are none. Not consolation, because short of having Matt and Sara back, there is none. The best that any of us who is grieving can do is to remember, actively, why Sara and Matt were so loved and admired in life, why they are so painfully missed in death, and why they remain role models even now.

We all know many people with great minds. We all know many people (not enough) with great hearts. To find someone who has both of these traits and who maximizes them toward common goal—that's rare. To find someone who does all that and does it with deep humility—that is almost unheard of...We have just been stripped of two such souls.

Matt and Sara were both brilliant, as their achievements at

JTS, Yale, and Barnard indicate. They both inspired and elevated so many around them in their relentless and dedicated commitment to rigorous Torah study. But to Matt and Sara, study of sacred text was not a cold, detached, intellectual exercise, nor was it a means toward achieving personal glory. They understood acutely that one does not primarily study sacred text, to affect it; rather, one learns it. One joins in relationship with the texts and the tradition they represent. For Matt and Sara, learning sacred text was all about becoming the best links that they could be in the eternal chain of transmission. And what could be a more humbling goal than that?

But as prodigious as both of them were in Talmudic ability, Sara and Matt were not just learning machines. Their service of God went far beyond the realms of the book and the ritual, and was most amplified in the realm of human interaction.

A week ago Sunday night, I was walking home from JTS, which is at 122nd and Broadway. I was walking on Broadway, clearly distraught, and a man named Donald, who has no home, extended his hand to me—not to ask for some change, but to say, "Hey, man I'm so sorry about Matt." Donald is new to the neighborhood, so he did not even know Matt or Sara, who had been in Israel all year, but their reputations preceded them, and Donald shared the community's pain.

Last year, there was a homeless woman named Anne Saunders, may she now rest in peace, who, like many other homeless people, spent a lot of time in our neighborhood. Sara and Matt became friendly with her, and noticing that she was skilled with her hands, they bought her some yarn and needles, and took the time to teach her how to knit kipot, the Jewish head coverings. From that point, Anne knitted kipot and sold them to the many Jews in the neighborhood (I am wearing mine now). Sara and Matt helped her transform her cup from a beggars cup into a businesswoman's cash register. Yes, Matt and Sara gave to the needy; but more importantly, they shared of themselves in helping fellow human beings restore their own dignity. They didn't do it because they pitied the poor; they did it because they were neighbors. Neighbors should be friends, and who wouldn't give a friend a hand?

Through every fiber of their souls, in every minute of the day, Matt and Sara did what was right in service of God and humankind. And they didn't need to tell anybody about it. It's not that they were shy, as superficial acquaintances thought them to be at times. They were bold and courageous and pursued their ideals with passion. But they listened to, respected, and loved peers who disagreed.

What else can I say? The family that they were to become is irreplaceable and we have been unfairly denied the many gifts


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PREJUDICES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4
 racial, religious prejudice, etc., and one legitimizes all the rest.

I had talked bravely on that occasion, I had come as close as I have ever in my life to a state of perfect self righteousness. And, I believed what I said. But had I behaved with perfect probity when I was faced with the dirty man with the dirty mouth at the Columbia coffee shop? I had made a critical comment; I had expressed my dissatisfaction. But I had done it in passing, as an aside, and I had left the shop quickly. I had not looked him directly in the eye; I had not

told him to his face he was wrong; I had not stood up directly for the two fellows who were being berated; I had not been as forceful as I had been with my students. There were reasons I could site: the wish to avoid a scene; the desire to preserve dignity; respect for local customs; the wish to make others feel comfortable.

But was it right? By not taking a more forceful stance had I somehow communicated that anti-semitism, gay bashing, and anti-southern prejudice are acceptable? Had I deferred in part to the man with the dirty coat and mouth, as my students had trimmed their sales

before the person in the coat and tie. If I had to do it over again, would I be more forceful and maybe even a little reckless? Would I accept fully the lesson I asked my students to learn? I would like to think so, but I find myself wondering. 



DEAN RICK FERRARO
 is the Dean of Students
 for The School of
 General Studies.


ACTIVITIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7
 tant to put these beliefs to good works. I had the honor of representing students on the Earl Hall search committee. Aside from being the longest search committee to convene in the history of Columbia (est. 1754), it served to broaden my perspective on the vast array of activities at Columbia: Double Discovery Center, General Equivalency Diploma programs, and numerous other outreach programs to the City of New York. How many GS students could spare a few hours a weekend to be a Big Brother or Big Sister? I think more than currently do.

GS also has its own student activities. There is The Observer, for example. There is the Writers Club (an old and prestigious club that has some connection to J.D. Salinger, among others). There is the GSSC, the student govern-

ment (upset about anything in particular? start there). Here at Columbia I have encountered an African-American students club, an environmental club, and various literary publications, to name a few. The GSSC allocates dollars, your student activities fee, to these endeavors. So if you want to see those moneys, give a call to your student government representative.

Back to the future. GS still needs a number of things. At the top of my wish-list would be the following:

- A name with "College" in it.
- * An endowment (read: lowers your tuition payout).
- * Greater visibility.
- * Active alumni involvement.
- An alumni directory (should not even be a question!!!).
- * Revamping of GS Core Curriculum, to include "great books" of whatever culture.


- Collaborate on admissions, when possible, with the College.
- Implement an Economics major with a Finance concentration.
- More night and weekend classes.
- Start relationships with major corporations that might be willing to fund promising employees education.
- Finally, remember that Columbia, GS or whatever, must not rest on past success. NYU and others will overtake us, and draw our students away, if the University is complacent. 



WALTER SWEET
 is the former President of
 the General Studies
 Student Council and
 former Editor of The
 Observer.

PAIN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28
 for food, and to have complex relationships with her captors. Were she to be adopted by the Narragansetts, and if other settlers followed suit, or were settlers to reject the frontier in favor of the safety of the larger settlements, the entire New England colony would be threatened. Therefore, for the Puritan clerical rulers of the colonies, pain and suffering and the dislocation that follows must become the pain and suffering that leads to transcendence in order for the sinner to join the community of saints, to be a consensual participant in the spiritual and political body.

Physical pain and illness and the dislocation they produces are a force that can threaten communities as well as the individuals who suffer it. Representations of pain and suffering in narratives can reproduce that power to dislocate. It is a kind of power that involves the identification of the reader with the sufferer. Images of violence against the body or of the distorted by illness convey suffering more effectively than any other kind of representation. To the degree that is bound up with structures of a narrative that create suspense, the reader's identification with a narrator or character in a narrative is

physically felt by the reader as the tension produced by the anticipation of the onset of pain. The effects of pain and suffering, then, are reproduced in texts which involve us in dislocation and reformation—of our relations to communities and the structures of authority. The question is what interpretive frame we rely on to contain the effects of this dislocation. 

REBECCA GARDEN
 GS '89, is working on her dissertation on pain and illness in 18th century English and American Literature while teaching GS Composition and Literature classes.

Columbia Composers

by *Elias Colombotos*

Concert-goers at the Kathryn Bache Miller Theater were treated to a performance of *Speculum Musicae* on Friday, March 8. This New York based ensemble has been giving concerts while fostering the music of living composers for 25 years—adding to the development of contemporary music. The Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music at Columbia University sponsored the free concert. But those who appreciated the gift most were the *Columbia Composers*. Two School of The Arts graduates, Peter Susser and Steven C. Sacco, and three current students, Dan Wanner, Andrew Byrne, and Joel Phillip Friedman heard a sensitive treatment of their compositions.

The first movement of Joel Phillip Friedman Elastic Band successfully unites traditions from the classical and funk-fusion fronts. If Mr. Friedman's musical language originated in Vienna, it must have had a connecting flight in Motown or New Orleans before arriving


in New York. This groove's in the pocket. The ensemble of string quartet, clarinet and percussion clearly had fun. Clarinetist Alan Blustine's goose necking and percussionist Jim Baker's stationary stride seemed to express something more than the sophisticatedly constructed ideas of the composer—something like "Joel Phillip Friedman's in the house"

Peter Susser's conceptual work, Quintet For Piano and Strings, was originally titled *Spielkes*—which means anxiety and restlessness in Yiddish. A solid *moto perpetuo* by the piano in the first movement lays down an antagonizing and relentless pulse to which the strings respond with an equally antagonizing defiance. Comedy and playfulness drive Mr. Susser's delightfully self-effacing composition. And the players joined in the mocking fun, tensely executing very long slurs, coyly placed *pizzicato* and tapping the bodies or their instruments. Mr. Susser's background as a cellist is evident in the challenging string tech-

niques he wrote into *Spielkes* which the players executed in a highly charged performance.


Drama-provoking bursts of sound punctuate the otherwise static posture of Dan Wanner's *Largo*. The arrhythmic and atonal gestures inspire more thinking than toe tapping for the average listener (including this one) but about what the patiently striving audience is left scratching their heads.

An invigorating, continuous-breath clarinet cadenza highlighted *Necessities of Life* by Andrew Byrne. But the poetry of Adrienne Rich, set for soprano, was lost in the muddy vowels of the singer's performance. Mr. Byrne's intention—to express the strongly personal, first-person point of view of Rich's verse in this six-movement piece wasn't particularly articulated.

The Columbia Composers is a non-profit, student-run organization that was created in the 1950's to perform works by Columbia students. Their next concert will be April 28. 

HESPED, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

that the children they would have had, and the students they would have cultivated, should have brought to the world.

As I grieve this incalculable loss with my communities, all I can do is recall a beautiful passage from the Talmud, taught to me last year by Sara. The passage tells of a series of Rabbis attempting to console Rabbinic friends who had fallen ill and could not understand the reasons for their suffering. Their friends did not try to rationalize it or explain it. Each one simply held the hand of his pained friend and sat and cried in quiet sadness with him. This was the kind of friendship that helped them to overcome their suffering. May we find this strength in our grief. May the memories of Sara Duker and Matt Eisenfeld and all they gave us be only for blessing and inspiration. 


ARYEH BERNSTEIN

GS/JTS '98, from Chicago, is in the Joint Program between Columbia and the Jewish Theological Seminary, majoring in Psychology and Talmud.

POSSIBILITIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 of the Governor's Executive Budget Recommendations for Higher Education are but a moon-cast shadow compared to the complexity of what is going on down in Washington.

The 104th Congress has targeted students, the poor, affirmative action, the environment and educational funding, in some form or another, in every proposed budget they have sent through the Senate to President Clinton. They have tried to eliminate the need-based Perkins Loan program, limit Federal Work Study, cut back on Pell Grants, put a 10% cap on direct lending. If this is not enough, the proposed "Balanced Budget Amendment" would have cut education by 33% over the next seven years. It is difficult to fathom the logic behind these cuts in a field so vital for keeping America competitive in the years to come. Strangely, there have been no proposals to cut legislative salaries so that everyone can share in the period of austerity some believe is a necessity if

America is to ever eliminate the deficit.

The "Republican Revolution" of Chairman Newt promised us change and it has certainly delivered. Congresses have always disagreed with Presidents, but no other Congress in our country's history has had the foresight to abandon consensus in favor of coercion. This brilliant strategy has forced the federal government to close down twice and avoid bankruptcy only through a series of twelve budget continuations. President Clinton just won't agree to deliver a balanced budget at the expense of the poor, the environment or needy students. Remember that in November. On the other hand, a second term for the Gang of '94 offers endless possibilities for change. 

BERNIE LENAHAN

is a fourth year General Studies student with an interest in politics and writing. He has a background in boxing, bouncing, bartending and acting. After graduation he plans to pursue either obscene wealth or smug, middle class complacency.

SAYING IT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

He hit it again and again. He stopped when it ail lay around him, destroyed. Amongst the debris, brown, red, yellow, green, pink teddy bears lay, their mouths smiling, their eyes staring up at him. He picked one up. Putting it under his arm he stepped carefully out of the wreckage and walked back to the pick-up.

Jason drove along, headlights shooting out in front, a red glow trailing behind. Within the cab, the sickly yellow light of the dashboard instruments gently illuminated Jason and the stuffed bear. Jason kept looking from the road to stare into the bear's brown eyes.

The house stood silent in the moonlight; open windows exhaled

the breezes floating through their home. Jason brought the truck to a stop in front of the house, turned-off the engine, the lights, and sat, imagining Ruth asleep inside draped in the white sheets of their bed, quiet, gentle and soft. Jason climbed out of the cab and walked across the grass, and through the shadowy hall. He entered the dark of their bedroom. There she lay. Jason went to her. He reached out to touch her. He couldn't do it. He swallowed and his throat felt thick. He opened his mouth to speak, but he didn't dare, not even to whisper. He placed the bear next to her on the bed. Jason's fist became tight again. His eyes stung. He turned in the silence and walked out.

Light was floating slowly across the land as full morning approached. Jason walked to the spot in the yard where he had seen his wife standing yesterday. He looked up into the sky and inhaled deeply as she had. He reached into his pocket and took out his jackknife. He opened the long blade and took the few steps to the trunk of the elm. He felt its bark with his fingers and lips and cheek. He hugged it. He stuck his knife into it and sliced off pieces of that bark, gouging into the clean wood. He carved the word LOVE.

ANDREW CHAPIN, as a writer stimulated by the psychological, Andrew counsels in Columbia's School of Law Career Services Office, where he writes and edits many of their career-related publications. A winner of the 1993 Writers Club Award for Fiction, Andrew graduated from the GS Literature-Writing Program with departmental honors.

BEAST, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

some of us, until academic aspirations are realized, there is no going home.

Sometimes I have done well. And sometimes not. However I had no premonition at that time of how important black faces, and those reciprocating gazes of acknowledgement and recognition, would come to mean to me. The black student at the elite white institution soon learns that economy of the gaze, within which lies reciprocal identity-formation, fraught with intimations of desire, mutual recognition, and survival. This gaze, once denied either on the basis of chromatic difference or fear of black male sexual aggressiveness, must be sought wherever it may exist. For my part, even offering a greeting to black strangers became a necessary affiliative act of survival. After years of negotiating different roles and different masks, it took a trip to Psychological Services before I could even begin to articulate my not-so-well-managed anger, and see, for example, my chronic struggle with handing in written work as a form of withholding.

This essay, therefore, is nothing less than a call to organization to black students at the School of General Studies. To really "Live! . . . in the noise of the whirlwind" as Gwendolyn Brooks sermonizes. Confronting the beast of our own fears need not be tackled alone in sequestered rooms, along with the myriad challenges


of family and work, hours commute from campus. Black community at GS must be imagined, then created out of a commitment to articulating diverse traditions, assertive collective action, and seizing the master's books if necessary. (Even as I write this, students have taken the Low library in an act of defiance not seen on this campus since the 1960s, and has again revealed the corporate superstructure of our educational institution, which, in closing the gates to the outside world in an attempt to isolate the protesters, shows us that our Columbia IDs are nothing more than passbooks to a fortified camp, and any appearance of community outside the University's official circumscription is an illusion.)

Black students at General Studies are Latin American, Caribbean, African-American, European, African, french-speaking, creole-speaking, english-speaking, Spanish-speaking, dark skinned, light-skinned, full-lipped, thin-lipped, bourgeois, revolutionary, privileged, poor. While we, as politically conscious students, must acknowledge the sliding nature of identity and the arbitrariness of signs in choosing to identify oneself as "black," let there be no mistaking the fact that America knows who the "black" is — for whites already here, the white racial unifier against disorder and criminal pathology, and for the new immigrant, the affiliation to be avoided at the

Americanizing door in order to gain full entry.

The challenge for a new black student network at General Studies therefore is to create and sustain black community, to proclaim Black racial uplift within a discourse of inclusiveness even as we challenge reductionist notions of identity, to link student advocacy to wider conceptions of justice and radical democracy, to literally imagine a community out of denial. We may suddenly discover the paradoxical meaning suggested in Jake Wideman's haiku on the Million Man March:

Why, I cry, do I
see myself so clearly now
nestled in your midst?

We must reject racial engagement at the margins and step, no, jump into the center, so that we can consolidate, heal, love, play, learn, and graduate. 

STEVE CUPID THEODORE is a student of Political Science and Comparative Literature at GS. He has called for the formation of a black student network at GS.

Since the writing of this article, a Coordinating Committee has already been formed. For further information, please contact Steve Theodore (smr10), Albert Jennings (aj39), Marilyn Chariot (212.982.1593), or Joseph Champagne (jic42).

Wheels in Motion

by Marilyn Chariot

On January 15, 1991, I was stationed at Taegu, Korea as a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army. At approximately 2.00 AM, my phone rang. My mother, Bertha, frantically told me to turn on CNN. Desert Shield had shifted to Desert Storm. I stared at the screen in awe. Life is so precious. I hoped that somehow former president George Bush and Saddam Hussain would come to an agreement. I was thirty years young and on stand-by to fight a war I knew very little about.

My main goal during my senior year in high school was to become a professional athlete. Upon graduation, I was voted the best female athlete at Samuel J. Tilden High School in Brooklyn. As a senior, I was captain of the girls' varsity volleyball, basketball, and Softball teams and was awarded most valuable player of all three. I was proud to have won the respect and the honor of my team, the coaches and the members of the school. My leadership contributed to our participation in several championships at the city level throughout New York.

But there were few athletic opportunities for women, so I enlisted in the Army and honorably served two consecutive terms. In retrospect, I think this was the period in my life where reality "kicked in" and I settled for whatever was available to me. Not that it was right or wrong; I just didn't follow my dreams.

I later learned there was a shortage of female aviators in the military. I was interested in aviation. I took the pilot's exam and applied to the aviation program. My application was denied. I became afraid of taking risks and started living a safer life. It was as if I started living as a victim.

On January 15, 1991, I was confronted with death for the first time in my life. I very seldom slept because I wanted to enjoy every waking moment. I became sensitive to every sunrise. Everything mattered. I contemplated all of my past experiences, sketching in my mind the kind of relationship I had with my family, lovers, and friends. Did I really make a difference in anyone's life? Did I truly love unconditionally? Why hadn't I given myself wholeheartedly to the people I cared about?

I realized I had become a survivor in life rather than someone who fully enjoys

it. At some point in my life internal motivation about myself became "I don't matter," and "I am not enough, and I cannot do it." I stopped taking risks and consistent actions necessary for my life to progress the way it should. I stopped taking ownership of my life trying to transform it to its highest possibility.

During the war, through my prayers, I promised the Creator that if given another chance I would re-design my life and make a contribution to the world. I had no idea what this contribution would be and how it would unfold, yet I was totally committed to my declaration. Once I authentically declared what was in my heart, it seemed as though the universe brought forth all of the necessary tools I needed to take it on. Little did I know then that The School of General Studies at Columbia University would be the starting point and one of the vehicles supporting and driving me toward my vision. When the war was officially over, I completed my contract in the military with an Honorable Discharge. In August of 1991, I applied to Columbia and was accepted immediately. In January 1992, I became a full-time student, and it was very clear to me that my purpose at Columbia was no accident.

My vision for the world is love, peace, and unity; and, my role and commitment to that is to further the transformation of Haiti. I am responsible for what happens in this world and today I take a stand. During Alternate Spring Break '95, I was one of twenty-one students from Columbia who took a trip to Haiti to support the *Restore to Democracy* Project. My undergraduate training in economics and my visit have helped me to understand how the Haitian economy works.

Our meeting with Ambassador Swing revealed promise that Haiti is heading for stability. The new police force was being trained and the judicial system upgraded. I believe that the presence of America and the United Nations in Haiti will allow for opportunities in emerging markets. This may present tremendous growth opportunities for Haiti if the factors of production are readily available (i.e. human capital, physical capital, and technology). While in Haiti, I saw the need for new economic

policies in which the culture would be taken into consideration with sensitivity.

I would also like to explore the indigenous religion as it relates to economic development. Previous attempts to revitalize the Haitian economy have been thwarted due to underestimation of religion in the Haitian culture. It is important to be sensitive to any culture when implementing change.

During my time at Columbia, I have developed an interest in solving specific socioeconomic problems in Haiti. With the first democratic president in the country's history in place, the Haitian people are ready for economic reform.

In February of 1996, I completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics, and in the interim I developed relationships with various people who have supported me throughout my journey. I would like to acknowledge the following people for making a difference not only in my life but in the lives of so many other students at Columbia

Barbara Moss: You are a committed and loving person. Thank you for counseling me whether I had an appointment or not.

Barbara Tischler: I would not have completed my degree expeditiously without your assistance. You are a devoted and gentle-hearted woman. Thank you, we are very lucky to have you in GS.

Cheryl McIntyre: Through your eyes, Cheryl, you see everyone as a winner and are committed in supporting them and having them win. Thank you for being such a loving, caring, and honorable friend.

Remona Hunter: Mona, your faith is awesome! Being in its presence has inspired me to believe in myself and in my dreams. Thank you for always being there.


Jacob Brown: Your presence is still felt at GS. You gave me the key to the doors of opportunity in the fall of 1992. I thank you for your love and generosity.

Marie Chariot: You convinced me to apply to Columbia. Thank you for seeing in me what I could not see in myself

Tay Anna Gonzalez: I love you. Thank you for your patience and dedication you have given to our relationship. When I was stationed in Korea our phone bill totaled \$8,000.00. ☺



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